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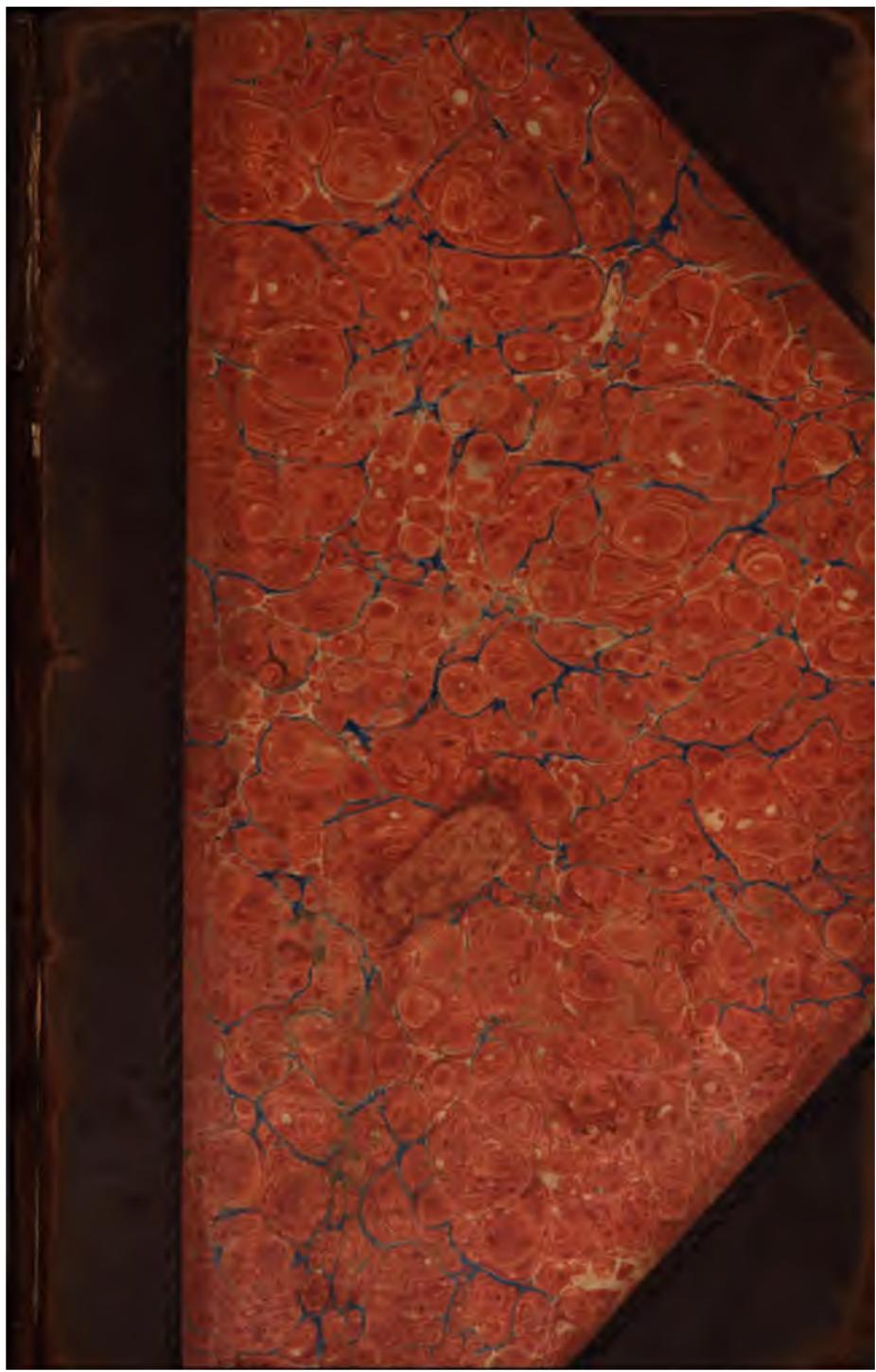
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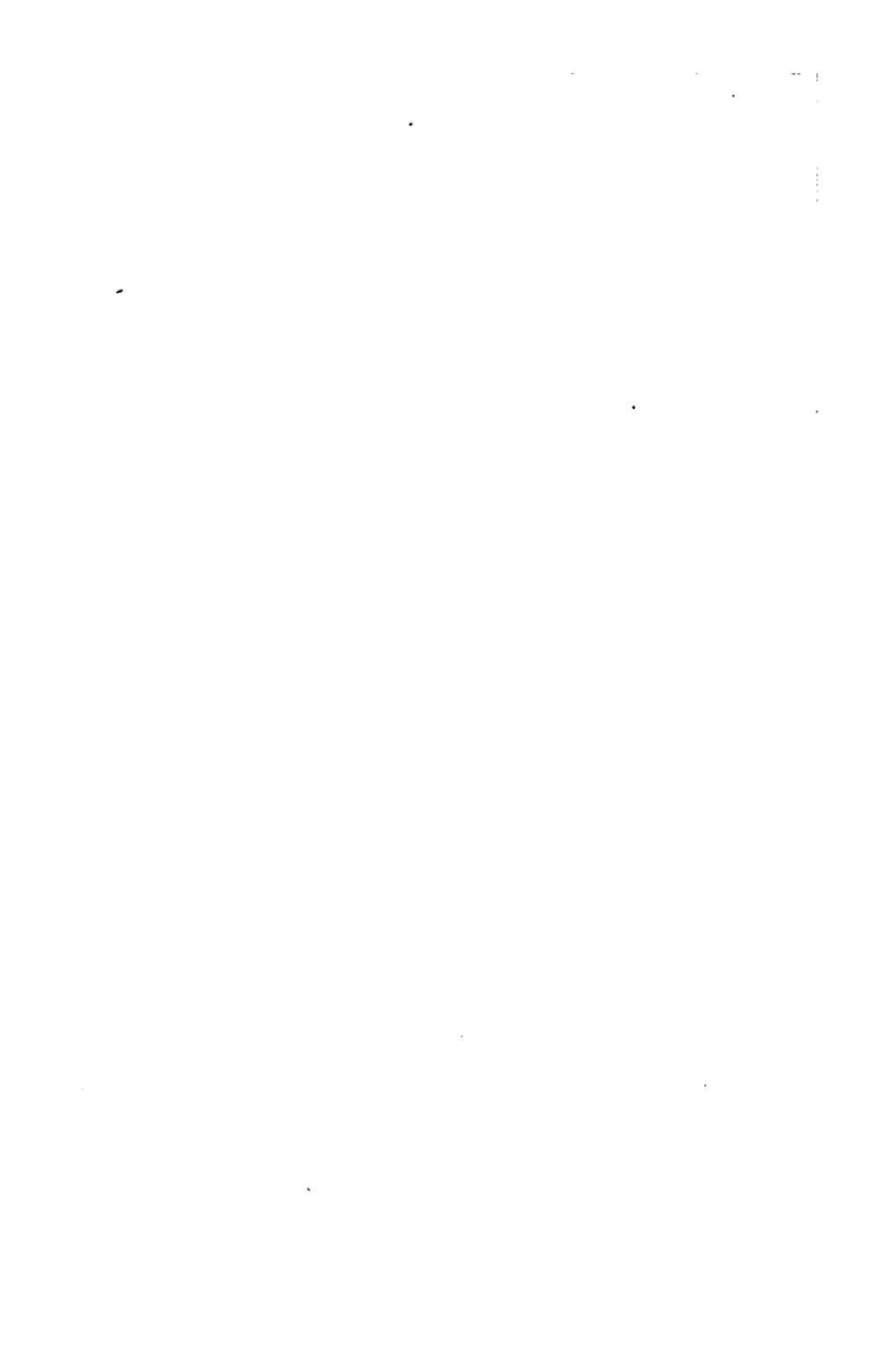


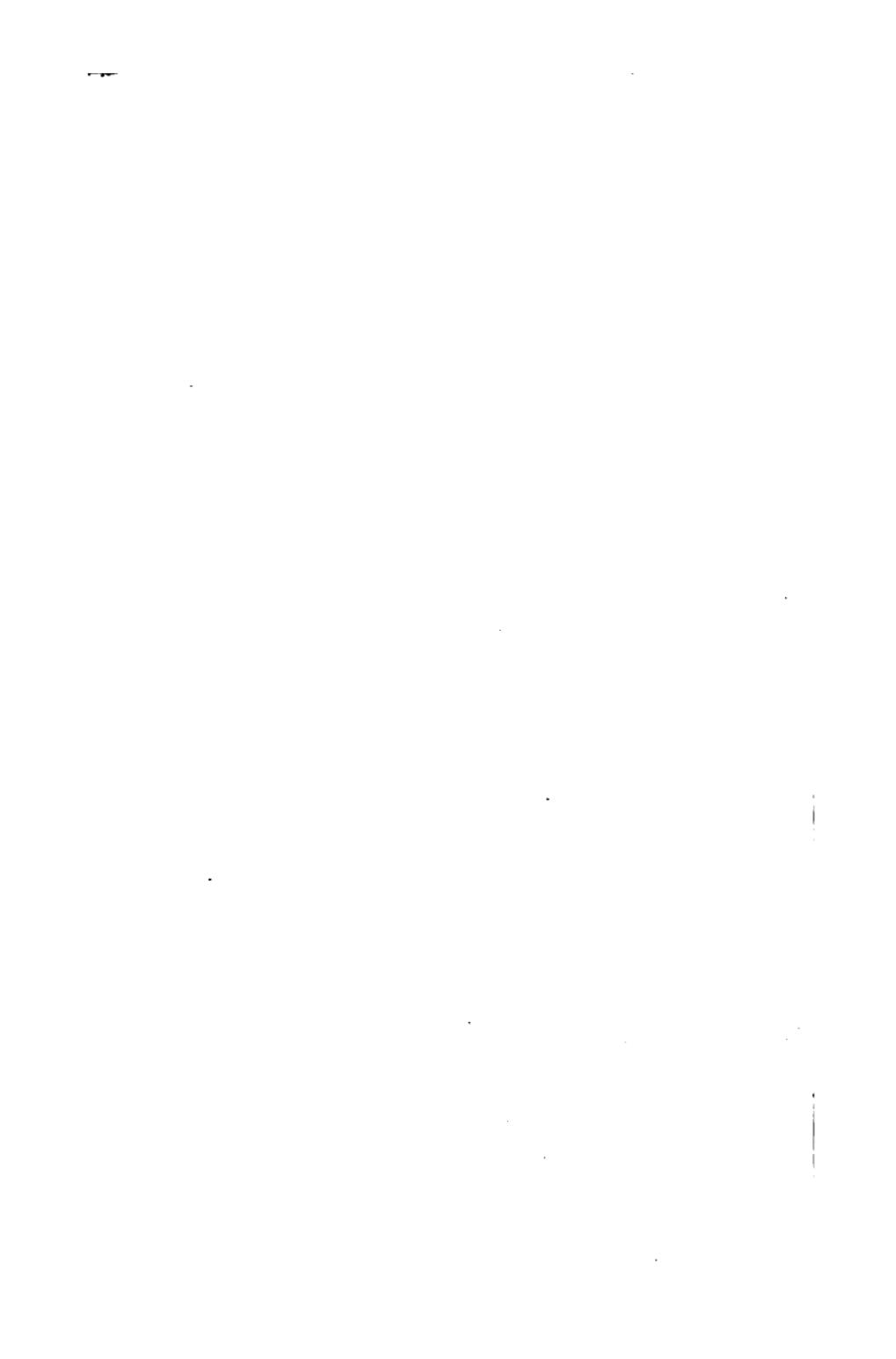


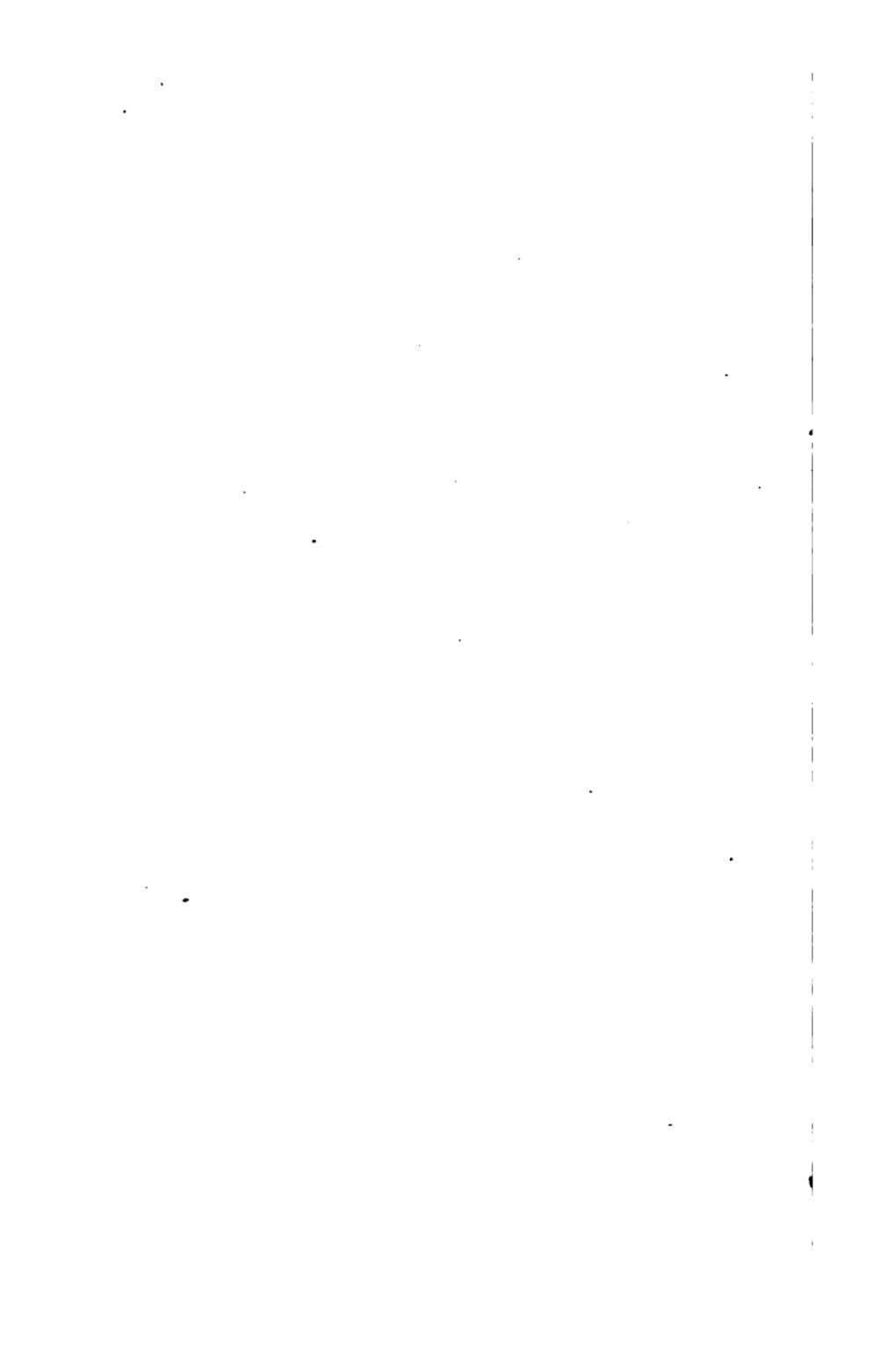
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THOUGHTS
ON THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN,
WITH A VIEW TO
THE AMELIORATION OF SOCIETY.

ADDRESSED TO
THE HIGHER AND MIDDLE CLASSES.
BY EMMA MEEK.

To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.
JAMES v. 17.

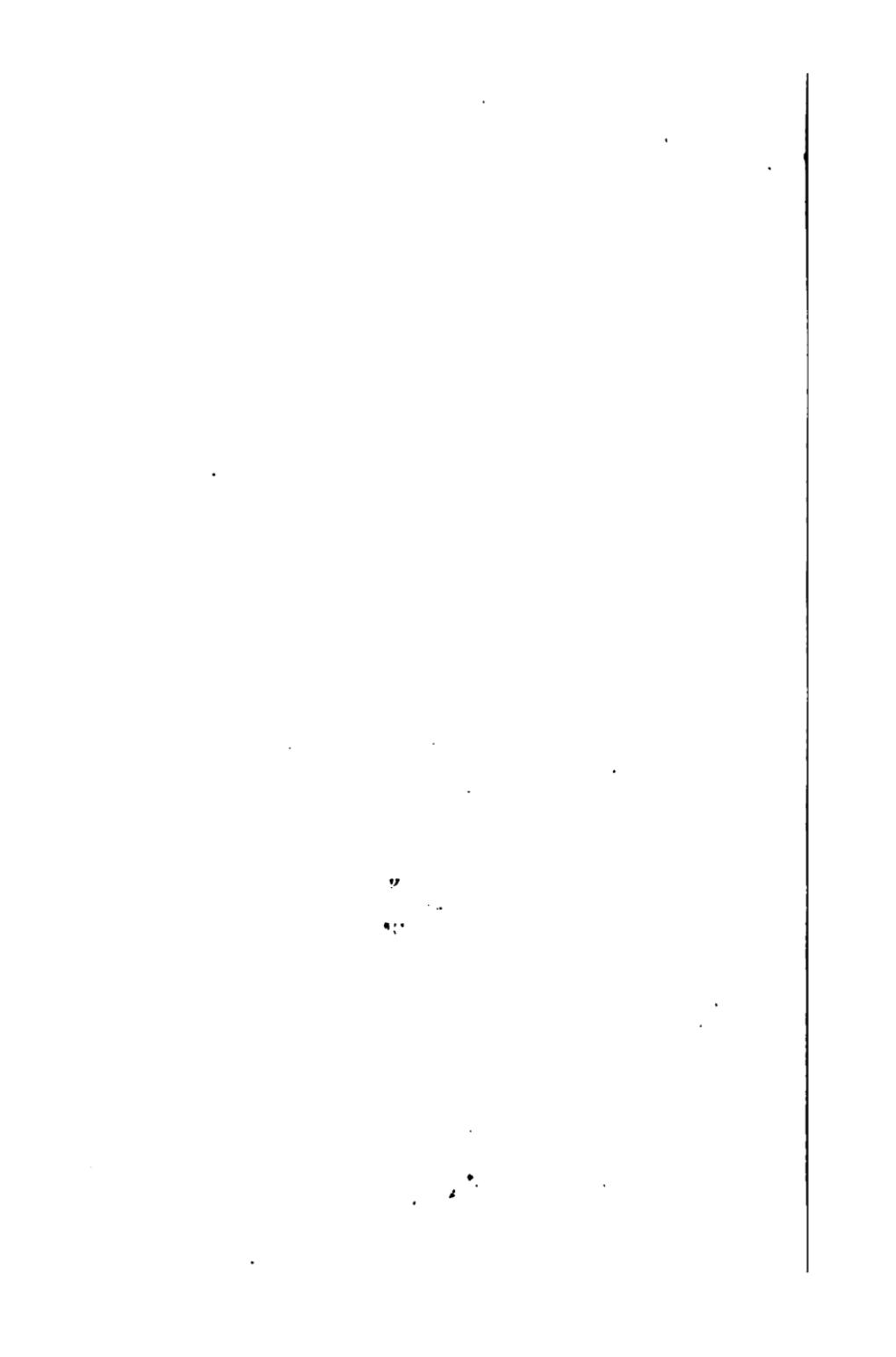
Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou shalt be no longer steward
LUKE xvi. 2.



London:
J. HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY.

1838.

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TO

THE REVEREND ROBERT MEEK,

RECTOR OF RICHMOND, YORKSHIRE,

(LATE OF BRIXTON DEVERILL, WILTS,)

THIS ESSAY,

BEGUN AND PUBLISHED AT HIS REQUEST,

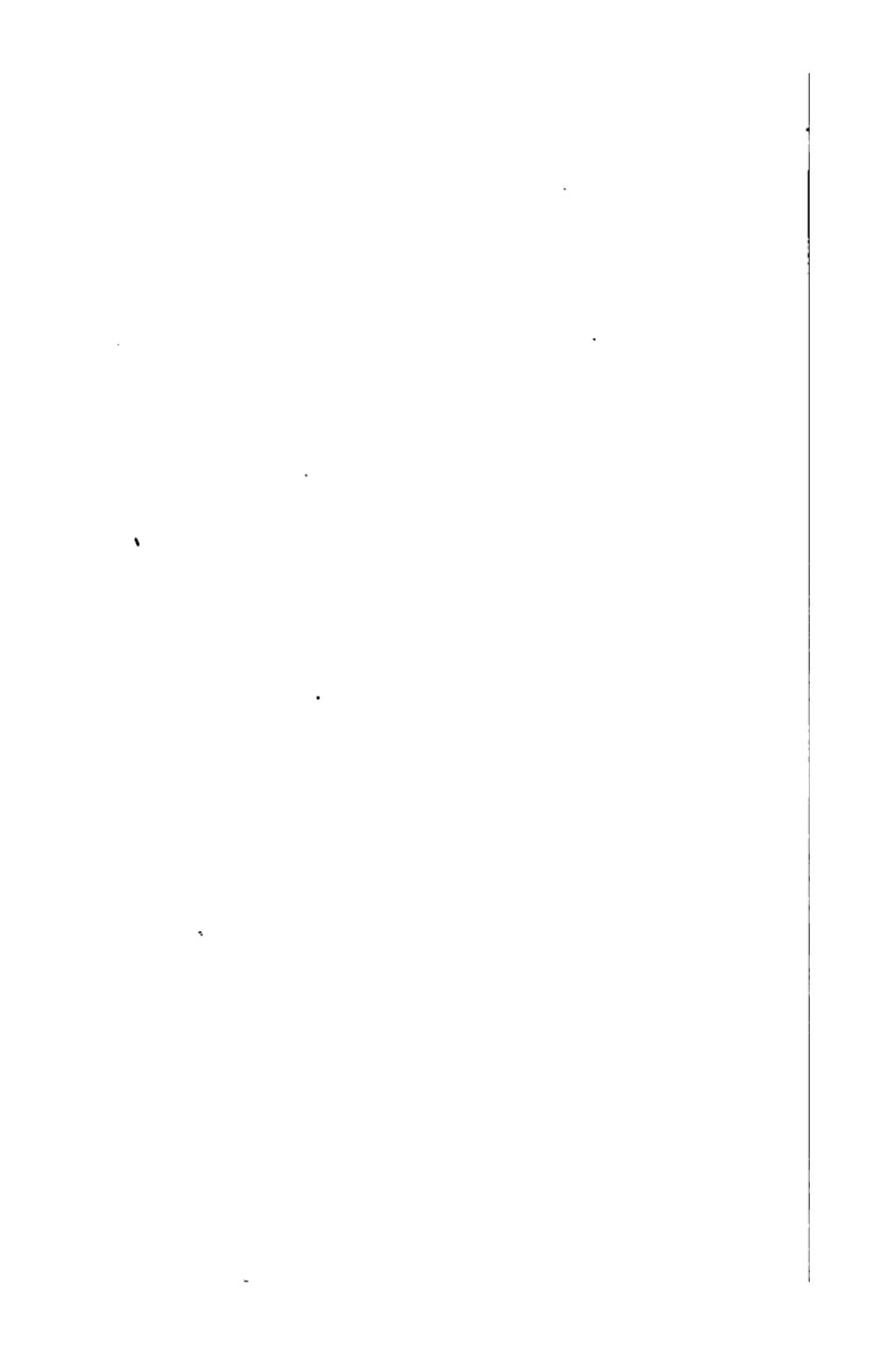
WITH EARNEST DESIRES FOR HIS USEFULNESS

AS A MINISTER AND A WRITER,

IS DEDICATED,

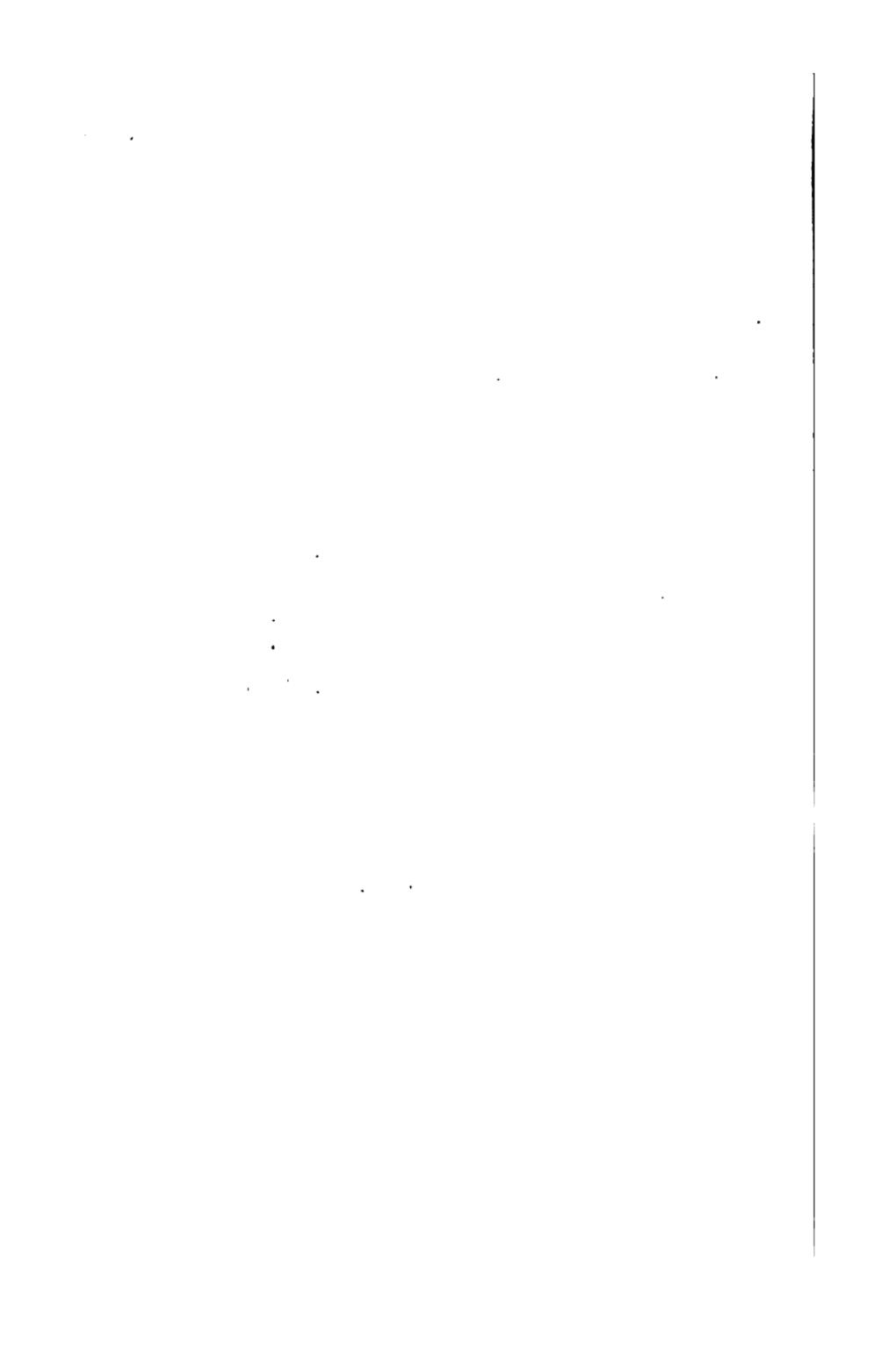
BY HIS AFFECTIONATE WIFE,

EMMA MEEK.



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THOUGHTS
ON THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN.

CHAPTER I.

NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

WE are not called upon in this work to prove that God governs the world. We are allowed to take it for granted that our readers receive the Bible in faith ; and we may address each individual as St. Paul addressed his noble auditor, “ King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets ? I know that thou believest.” If, then, we believe the prophets, we must believe that the Almighty Ruler of the universe looks down with interest on the concerns of this world which He has made ; that the Most High ruleth over men, and to accomplish his mighty purposes, exalteth or depresseth those great princes who, while seeking their own will, have but subserved the

designs of Omnipotence. The Jewish people of old were chosen to be the depositaries of revelation, the guardians of truth :—they prospered so long as they fulfilled these high trusts ; they were brought low when they neglected them. “Assyria, the rod of mine anger,” was, as the Lord had threatened, raised up to humble them ; and it would be easy, in reviewing the history of this distinguished nation, to point out how exactly their prosperity was proportioned to the faithfulness with which they fulfilled their high destiny, and how continually their lapses into that idolatry which they were exalted to destroy, were visited with the heaviest punishments.

The distribution of talents to nations, as well as to individuals, is diverse ; but the responsibility which attaches to each is in exact proportion to the advantages received. The whole tenor of gospel teaching goes to prove the solemn fact, that “to whomsoever much is given, of him much will be required.” The woes of Chorazin are declared to be greater than those of Tyre, because she had enjoyed the advantages of Christ’s teaching and miracles, without profiting by them : and, even the doom of guilty

Sodom is pronounced less dreadful than that of Capernaum, which had been exalted to heaven in the enjoyment of gospel privileges, but should be thrust down to hell for her neglect of them. But, if the favours bestowed on these eastern cities were great, how much greater are the favours bestowed on Christian England : if their responsibility was heavy, how much heavier is our own ? We have witnessed their punishment, let us take warning by their example ; and that we may become sensible of our responsibility, let us take a survey of our privileges. For no worthiness of ours, but by the undeserved mercy of God, have we been distinguished as a nation ; reared indeed, and educated amid the storms of adversity and the conflicts of faction ; but only rendered by these trials, like our native oak, more vigorous and more firm. The moral and intellectual darkness, which during the middle ages wrapt Europe in its shade, extended to our western isle, but was not unbroken by some brilliant lights, and we were among the first to hail with joy the dawning of that glorious day, when the Reformation, bursting like the sun from the clouds of night, threw its brilliant and startling rays over the Continent, and lighted up

in our sea-girt land a fire which has proved the lamp of the West, and which still stands a beacon to the nations. But the dominion of error was too firmly fixed to be uprooted without a struggle; the profession of the truth exposed its friends to persecution. The upholders of spiritual despotism wreaked their vengeance on the dead as well as on the living, and dragged from the silent tomb the bones of our venerable Wickliff that they might scatter his ashes to the wind. The reformers in England were exposed to dangers and misery by the relentless Mary, and numbers of all ages, and of both sexes, were called on to testify their belief of their religion in flames and torments. But these devoted men, who amid tribulation and anguish proved themselves the faithful servants of God, suffered not till they had established in this island a pure and reformed church; and still, by the mercy of the Most High, we retain this inestimable blessing. It was supported by the piety and talents of its first founders, and confirmed by their martyrdom; living, they upheld it by their virtuous boldness; dying, they sealed it with their blood.

Let us receive with gratitude the precious le-

gacy they have left us. Let their example confirm our attachment to that venerable church which they established ; and if at any time the malice of its enemies should induce them to attack it, let it animate its faithful members to defend it even unto death. The reformed church in England has from her foundation had to struggle with many difficulties ; but, by the blessing of the Almighty, she has weathered every storm which has assailed her ; and, supported by His omnipotent arm, has continued for three centuries the bulwark of Protestantism. She has endured the horrors of the Marian persecution ; she has withstood the assault of Puritanical enthusiasm ; she has seen her king led to the scaffold, and her episcopal government dissolved ; she has withstood the deteriorating influence of the dissipation of the second Charles ; she has seen the crown on the head of a Papist, and his power exerted against her ; she has seen her bishops sent to the Tower, and her liberty trampled in the dust. But, in spite of every trial and calamity, she still exists ; and is now in the height of her glory. Blind must be the eyes, and dull the feelings of those who do not in this wonderful preservation behold the power

of a merciful and gracious God still extending his interposing influence in defence of that establishment which was by His assistance first founded in these realms, which has been sustained by the instruments of His will, and which will flourish and endure as long as it shall please Him to shed on it the abundant blessings of His Holy Spirit. Surely, then, it should be the continual prayer of all who live in this highly-favoured land, that the Almighty may continue to us and our posterity that protection on which we must depend: and let us trust that he will not abandon us. But we have a duty to perform: let us be mindful alike of our advantages and of our responsibilities; and let us render back to the great Author of national prosperity that gratitude which is due for so many signal blessings, and employ in the cause of humanity that power which He has bestowed — a power which has never been possessed before; for, though Rome in former days sat as the mistress of the land, she had not the empire of the seas, which England now possesses. Millions of our race have been brought under the dominion or influence of this remote and once despised island.

The rise and progress of British power in India is so remarkable that we may well ask, “Why was it given?” Bishop Butler well remarks, “If the Gospel had its proper influence in the Christian world in general, as this country is the centre of trade, and the seat of learning, a very few years in all probability would settle Christianity in every country in the world without miraculous assistance.” Is it, then, too much to say that the reason *why* power was given to England in India, as elsewhere, is that she may exert it for the benefit of the human race? Does it not appear as if the Merciful Father of mankind, in pity to those of his creatures who “lay in darkness and the shadow of death,” had sent the English to their shores to be the messengers of peace, to bear the glad-tidings of the Gospel to the ignorant, and to alleviate by the spirit of light and liberty the sufferings of the poor degraded Hindoos? Has this great object been effected? If a nation is by the special mercy of God exalted and blessed that she may become a light to the world, can we expect that favour will be continued to her if she neglect the high duties demanded of her? The great question, then, of national prosperity

is involved in the question of national piety; and the patriot, as well as the Christian, must desire that England should, to the utmost of her ability, diffuse the light of knowledge, and the blessings of the Gospel, over the dark nations of the world; and convey to every shore that inestimable pearl of price wherewith she has herself been enriched. We cannot be at a loss to know what is the will of the Almighty when we remember that it is declared that "God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth," and that the last words of our Saviour before his ascension into heaven were, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." From this we may gather what is the great design of the moral governor of the earth. It appears that the preservation of the truth, the extension of the knowledge of revelation, the conversion of men to true religion, is the purpose of God in the government of His creatures.

It would be a glorious sight to behold a nation exerting all her energies to subserve this Divine purpose; to see kings as nursing fathers, and queens as nursing mothers to the church; anxious alike for the welfare of their subjects,

and the evangelizing of the world ; seeking peace rather than engaging in war, and ambitious rather to extend the empire of righteousness than to enlarge their own dominions.

The voice of prophecy bids us hope for that time when “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;” it sets before the eye of faith that glorious period when the Son of David “shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” When “all kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall serve him.” We are too apt to excuse our lukewarmness, as did the Jews of old in the time of Haggai, by saying, “the time is not come;” but, could the voice of inspiration again sound in mortal ears, what would be its accents? Would it not reply to us as to the chosen people in the Holy City, “Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?” Would it not call on us to consider our ways? and to avert by diligent exertion the threatened punishment?

But to those who, in the great work of advancing that kingdom of God, which we pray may come, wait for miraculous interposition, and

remit their efforts in the idea that the period is not yet arrived, we may address the words of our Lord, " My time is not yet come, but yours is always ready." That era in this world's history, to man unknown, but clearly before the eye of Omniscience, when the Divine purposes shall be accomplished, and Jew and Gentile be gathered into one fold, under one shepherd, may in our measurement of time be distant. This terrestrial globe may have to roll for centuries around the sun ere that luminary shine upon the glorious spectacle of a converted world ; but the millions of its population whose bodies now mingle with its soil, and whose souls are reserved for judgment, will surely at the last great day witness against those who neglected their spiritual good, and cry for vengeance on those favoured nations, who, possessing the light of truth, forgot, in the pursuit of glory or of gain, the duty of diffusing that light to the people " who were sitting in darkness."

" My time," saith our Lord, " is not yet come, but yours is always ready." The harvest may still be distant, but the seed-time is already with us. *To-day* is man's opportunity ; *to-morrow* is in the hands of God ; and in dependence

on His promised blessing let us sow the precious seed. Let us look on our fellow-creatures as immortal ; and consider that the children of our families, the servants of our households, the members of the society in which we dwell, are beings created for eternity, and endowed with faculties which shall flourish in unfading youth long after the earth on which we tread, and the sun on which we gaze, shall have grown old, and perished.

Would that England as a nation stood forth the patron of those glorious undertakings which have hitherto been left to the efforts of societies ! — that those individuals who possess, by their stations, by their popularity, or by their eloquence, an influence in our national councils, would direct the public attention to the furtherance of the great cause of humanity and religion ! We have of late years witnessed a great national achievement in the cause of humanity,—the abolition of the slave-trade, and subsequently the emancipation of the slave ; and as this mighty work was (under God) mainly brought about by the persevering efforts of one Christian statesman,* who is now gone to

* Mr. Wilberforce.

receive his crown of glory, so we will hope that his example will not be lost, but that his mantle may have fallen on some of our countrymen, who will in a kindred spirit, but for another object, rouse up their moral energies, and exert that influence which true patriotism and virtue will ever possess in a free country.

The friends of humanity must mourn when the name of Sadler is numbered among those who are no more; his efforts to relieve the misery of thousands of our infant population, who in factories are consigned to laborious misery, or relieved only by an early death, will make his memory dear to every parent, and to every friend of the helpless orphan. But will none be found to advocate that sacred cause of mercy which he so deeply felt, but of which death prevented his successful advocacy?

The responsibility which attaches to England as the mother of so many colonies, and the mistress of an Indian empire, to provide spiritual instruction for her people, is a subject of deep importance; and we hail with gratitude every advance made by our rulers to fulfil that mighty debt which is due to every individual under their control, whether native or foreign, to provide

religious advantages to the extent of their power. Our late revered monarch George the Third, who well deserves the title of "the father of his people," expressed a desire that every child in his dominions should be able to read the Holy Scriptures. This benevolent wish has been in some measure fulfilled by the zealous exertions of societies and individuals; though too little has been done by government, and that little only of late years. But these endeavours, though crowned in a great measure with success in England, have been scarcely extended beyond our own island. Much, very much, remains to be done; and we hope that our youthful queen may be animated with the same spirit as her now sainted grandfather, and extending that desire far more widely, may live to see the day when the children of India, of Ireland, and of our Colonies, may not only be able to read the blessed Bible, but to join in heart and voice in those touching petitions of our beautiful liturgy, which implore the Divine benediction on Her Majesty and her counsellors.

We have cause for gratitude as a nation when we review the history of the last half-century. How signally has England been protected from

that storm which laid low the kingdoms of Continental Europe. How mercifully has our island been defended from the wasting scourge of war, which has desolated the plains of Germany, or only enriched them with human blood. The mothers of England have been permitted to keep their sons at home, or to choose for them the path of honour abroad : while the parents of France have been compelled to part with the delight of their eyes, and see them marched away to many a campaign of horror, and to many a field of slaughter. The orphans of those brave but ill-fated men who were obliged to fight the battles of their tyrannical ruler, wandered about Germany bereft of parental care ; a burthen to society ; only to learn vice, and become hardened in sin ; dependent on the bounty of such bright patterns of humanity as Von der Eyke, Calam, and others. England has been spared these miseries. She has enjoyed the fertility of her soil without the curse of devastating war ; her reapers have gathered her golden harvests without being called away to fight in foreign battles. Her industry has been rewarded with success ; her trade has benefited the distant nations of the earth, and poured

back into her lap the riches of the new and old world ; her ships have crossed the ocean, and explored hitherto unknown seas, and her commerce, which rose only to a fresher vigour after the temporary check which the Corsican tyrant sought to impose upon her, has stretched her mighty arms from east to west, and embraced the globe itself in her enormous grasp. But these are temporal blessings ; let us look to those which are spiritual, and, as such, concern the eternal destiny of every individual among the millions of her population. We have basked in the sunshine of evangelical light. We have enjoyed those bright beams which have of late years been darting upwards from the moral horizon, and gaining fresh splendour every year. We have seen the sun of Gospel truth "shining more and more unto the perfect day ;" while neighbouring nations have been darkened by that black and fearful storm, which, engendered amid the clouds of a false philosophy, and gathering strength from the vices of a luxurious people, revolutionized the wretched country which gave it birth ; and broke in tremendous violence over Continental Europe. Nor did its influence cease when its first fury was past. It has left behind

it the deadly blight of infidelity. When during the latter part of the last century society was disorganized in France, was it nothing to have been preserved from similar calamity? Was it nothing to have had exhibited to our gaze the example of a virtuous court, adorned by the domestic virtues of George the Third, and his illustrious consort, who by the correctness of her own principles preserved an elevated standard of propriety in female society? Let us not overlook these signal advantages—advantages which appear the brighter when contrasted with the surrounding gloom.

Let England be faithful to the trust reposed in her; let her national exertions be proportioned to the necessities of her people: let her measure the advantages she has received with the improvement she has made of them, and weigh in the balance of the sanctuary what she *has* done against what she *ought* to have done.

The bread of life is the great gift which Christ came down from heaven to bestow on man; and it is His will that the inestimable treasure be universally distributed. Favoured indeed are those nations and those individuals who are made

the recipients and the dispensers of this heavenly treasure. Let England do her utmost that all the world may be supplied. Let her employ the wisdom with which she has been endowed, and the strength that has been given her, to devise plans, and to carry them into execution, which shall have for their object the improvement of every individual, subject to her influence ; which shall aim at nothing less than the advancement (so far as human efforts may advance it) of that glorious time when “the earth shall be full of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Let her go forth in the strength of the Lord God, and “make mention of his righteousness only.” Let her go forth as the champion of truth against idolatry and superstition, and let her, “taking the sword of the Spirit, and the shield of faith,” wage an enduring conflict against the powers of darkness ; but let her weapons be spiritual, and not carnal ; let her teach by example, and win by kindness ; let the spirit of peace rule in her councils, and the wisdom of her instruction distil as the dew upon the parched ground. Let perseverance do her work, and diligence watch her opportunity, to scatter the precious seeds

of knowledge upon the prepared soil ; and never let the children of Britain intermit their holy warfare till the banner of the Cross be planted upon every shore, and the glad tidings of salvation be echoed from pole to pole.

CHAPTER II.

ON INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

MAN has many things in common with the inferior animal natures which surround him ; like them he has senses and powers of body, and by many of the brute creation he is surpassed in the acuteness of the organs, or by the strength of muscle ; but he is distinguished from all these by a knowledge of right and wrong, and by a feeling that he is accountable for his actions. The universal belief that pervades mankind, alike in a civilized as in a savage state, that he is a responsible being, has led to various contrivances for propitiating the anger of Heaven. Human sacrifices even have demonstrated the universality of the apprehension that God will call man to a reckoning for his deeds, and that to appease the divine anger by the most costly victims was the true interest of

society. The consciousness of responsibility seems inherent in our nature, and is itself an evidence of that great truth which natural as well as revealed religion inculcates, that there is a Moral Governor of the world, who will demand of the creatures he has made an account of the sins they have committed, and the virtues they have neglected. That man is accountable to God, to society, to his country, was in the times of classical antiquity acknowledged by a universal voice. The philosophers and poets of ancient days united in enforcing this solemn truth. The one urged it on their disciples in the groves of Accademos, the other embalmed in undying poetry the praises of those who bled for their country; they proposed to their admirers the glorious prize of fame, and bestowed on the self-denying and devoted patriot the laurels of immortal praise.

But it was not only the word of the philosopher and the poet, but the general testimony of mankind, which awarded the wreath of honour to those who, in an hour of public danger, would devote themselves for the legions,—would leap into the fiery gulf, or defy the tortures of ingenious cruelty, rather than be party to an

ignominious peace. The spirit of Spartan legislation so strongly favoured the idea of responsibility, that the interest of the individual was merged in that of the state; and for more than five centuries, during which the laws of Lacedemon bore the impress which had been stamped upon them by Lycurgus, the feeling that man was to serve his country, rather than to save his life, was interwoven with the very texture of society, and imbibed by the infant even with its mother's milk.

But it is only when we view man with respect to *eternity* that we can rightly estimate the value of his actions; they then assume an importance which they possessed not before. Were the master of a school to watch his scholars with an impartial eye, and determine that on their conduct for a definite, but to them unknown period, would depend, not only his appreciation of their character, but their success or failure during their future career, is it possible to suppose that even the thoughtlessness of youth could make them so utterly indifferent to the favour of their superior, as to waste in idleness those hours on the employment of which depended their prospects through

life? What should we say of these scholars if, in the certain knowledge that their master's eye was upon them, they were obstinately to neglect his admonitions, and, dissipating their energies in collecting the toys of childhood, thought of nothing but passing in vain amusement the present hour. Yet of the same folly, yea, of much greater folly, are those guilty, who, with the page of revelation before their eyes, day after day neglect its warning, and pass in worldly cares, or worldly pleasures, that time which is alike of infinite importance and of uncertain duration. How many of this generation have now entered on the last year of life, and are drawing to the close of that allotted trial which will determine their destiny through eternity. To multitudes the final hour of probation is begun, and before the clock again strikes, their lot in blessedness or woe will be for ever cast. The sun will this day go down on many who will never again behold its rising beams till the morning of resurrection. The souls of those who died yesterday are beyond repentance,—our care can do nothing for them. But shall we do nothing for those who are yet within the reach of our benevolence? Can we not

send the light of life to them who are yet sitting in darkness, and snatch from destruction those who are perishing for lack of knowledge? Let not the rich forget, in his luxury, that there may be some Lazarus, not indeed at his own gate, but in his own neighbourhood, who needs his care. The beggar may die and be carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; but let Dives remember that if he defer his relief till to-morrow, he may have lost an opportunity of doing good which may never be extended to him again. On his fulfilling the duty of benevolence to this individual may hang the award of future judgment, and the neglect of a fellow-creature in distress may subject him to that awful sentence, "inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me."

There is no principle of Christianity more frequently disregarded in practice than that which is embodied in the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." Man is naturally disposed to think that he is his own,—that his time is his own; and when that time is not occupied in accumulating gain, it is spent gene-

rally in the enjoyment of pleasure, or indulgence of ease. If a man is born to wealth or to honours, the first idea which seems to arise in the mind of himself and his companions is, that he is to be a gentleman of his pleasure,—a gentleman at large, free to do as he will,—to enjoy the good things he has, and to spend his time and money just as he pleases : probably it would be considered the height of virtue if he keep within his income, and can find wherewithal to purchase his gratifications. If he abstain from those vices which degrade character ; if he is honourable in his conduct, and just in his payments, he may receive the incense of public admiration, and go down to the grave with honour. Alas ! what will be his lot when weighed in the balance of eternal justice,—when called to give an account of those talents which had been committed to him. It will then be too late to awake from that soothing delusion which had persuaded him that as he had done no harm, he had nothing to fear. Perhaps he was ignorant that he had possessed these talents. He might never have considered that it was in his power to do any great good. He had been just and moral,—he had never broken the

sabbath,—he had never injured any one. We know that in earthly things disappointment adds poignancy to grief, and that when we have expected happiness, to find sorrow would make our misery greater by the contrast of anticipated bliss. What then must be the sensations of a disembodied spirit who awakens for the first time to the consciousness that he once possessed a weighty responsibility, of which he was never aware till the opportunity of action had passed away? What would one of our commercial adventurers feel, if, on being roused from a fit of lethargy, or brought back from some scene of amusement, he was to find that a golden opportunity of successful speculation had been offered him, but that the moment for profiting by it was gone by? Would not the idea of having lost the prize within his reach haunt his mind, and embitter by self-reproach the enjoyment of those luxuries with which he had surrounded himself? If, then, the feelings of regret are so keen on the loss of a little temporal wealth, what must they be on the loss of heavenly blessedness,—when the soul is all naked to the acuteness of sensibility, to hear from the Almighty Judge the sentence which He has threat-

ened to pronounce on the unprofitable holder of even one talent. Let the anticipations of a day of retribution awaken the slothful, and stimulate the diligent, and let us all set before us “the prize of our high calling,” looking forwards with the eye of faith to that event which is the only certain event in the womb of time,—*the inevitable judgment that awaits us.* The truth that we are not our own, was acknowledged to be true by the philosophers and heroes of antiquity; but it remained for Christianity to enforce it by the consideration that “we are bought with a price.” What that price was, revelation makes known; and the history of the Saviour appeals with the simple force of truth to our best feelings. If Christ “so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” We know that the nature of man is such that while he resists force, he will yield to gentleness; and to this part of the human character is the gospel especially addressed.

The Redeemer left the throne of his glory to suffer in the form of man:—not to reign among kings, but to be among his disciples “as one that serveth.” The spirit of Christianity, and the example of its Divine Founder, are subver-

sive of all selfishness ; the aim of the gospel is to teach us that as we owe eternal happiness to the death of Christ, so we ought to show our gratitude to our benefactor by acts of love to our brethren. The persuasive tenderness of St. John, the manly eloquence of St. Paul, the solemn teaching of the Lord Jesus himself, are all directed against the selfishness of man's heart, and concur to enforce upon his conscience the principle that he is not his own, but bought with a price. Not his own, to follow blindly the dictates of his own will,—not his own, to indulge in sloth, or to gratify passion,—not his own, to toil all his days for riches, and then spend them on himself,—not his own, to pass his life in pleasure, and his time in vanity,—but bought with a price,—even the price of a Saviour's blood, to serve the great purpose of that Saviour who died for him ; to extend the blessings of the gospel to the heathen, and to diffuse in continually spreading circles that spirit of divine charity which will itself endure for ever, and which will preserve from decay the principles of human society.

It too frequently happens that when an individual comes into possession of an estate, or is

placed by favourable circumstances in an affluent condition, the first thought that occurs is, How may taste be best displayed?—and expensive fancy most gratified in adorning with every luxury that art can devise, or wealth command, the abode and its precincts? The commonly-received opinions of the world would lead a man no higher; and if something—if anything is done to relieve the destitute by the accustomed liberalities of Christmas, and the funds of some neighbouring school are augmented by the rich man, society and the individual himself would be satisfied, and public admiration might follow. But is this enough to fulfil the demands of Christianity?—is it consistent with the professed follower of a crucified Master?—does it agree with His injunctions to *deny* ourselves?—with His interdiction of the love of the world?—will the now current principles of *this* world be acknowledged in *that* which is to come?—will the man clothed in purple and fine linen, and living sumptuously every day, who forgets the poor, fare better in the last day than his prototype in the parable? In nothing do we more strongly see the power of that subtle evil spirit, who hath blinded the eyes of men, than

in the remarkable discrepancy between the judgment of the Saviour and the judgment of the world in the value of riches. Christ, who might have chosen the highest station, chose the lowest. Which even of his professed disciples would imitate him in this? Christ might have commanded the wealth of worlds—he lived and died in poverty. What Christian would voluntarily follow him here? Christ has said, “Woe to ye that are rich:”—we say, or at least think and act accordingly, “How blessed are ye that are rich!” We honour the wealthy, and seek to become so ourselves. Gold, in some shape or other, is the great idol which all England and the world worshippeth. “Ought these things so to be?” Is this agreeable to the spirit of St. Paul, when he sought not his own profit, but the profit of many? Would that a higher standard of Christian self-denial were set up among us!—would that the daily practice of those who profess to follow Christ were more strictly measured with the plain and express instructions of their great leader! The only rule by which Christians now deem it necessary to try to what extent they may surround themselves with luxuries, is the measure of what they can afford.

But is this a rule that will be acknowledged when the Almighty God will judge each for the talents He has given, and the riches He has lent? Though wealth cannot save, we know that it may condemn. The beginning of the fifth chapter of the epistle of St. James contains an awful description, which must apply to some. Does it apply to ourselves? Does the denunciation pronounced on the selfish holders of this world's good even remotely condemn us? If we know that our future lot will be proportioned to our deserts, and that our conduct will not be judged by the voice of the world, but by the voice of God, is it not madness to order that conduct not by the laws of God, but by the opinions of the world? Who among the thousands of our studious youth would, in preparing for an academical examination, overlook the plain directions given him by those who were to award the crown of honour, and act upon the principle that he knew better than his judges what course of study would best fit him for meriting their approval? Our condemnation would at once fall on such folly; and yet we think little of the folly of those who, in heaping up riches, are only heaping up for themselves "wrath

against the day of wrath." We should view the objects of human ambition by the light in which they are looked on by Him who, having made all things, knows the true value of all things. What that light is, the Holy Scriptures tell us; and by the light of Scripture it is alike our interest, our wisdom, and our happiness to walk. Let us seek, then, to judge of objects, and to direct our pursuit of them, by the light of Divine truth; and let us say with David, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths." Let us seek a more just appreciation of what are called, in common but pagan language, "the goods of Fortune." Let us remember that "the time is short:" that every day is bearing us onward to that shore, in quitting which we must leave behind us all our gains,—except that godliness which alone is declared by the Holy Spirit to be "great gain." We do not really want, neither can we really enjoy, more than a small portion of the good things of earth. How truly is it said, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase; when goods increase, they are increased that eat them; and what good is there to the owners

thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?" A higher standard of virtue, a more Christian rule in judging the value of things, is required in the world,—is required even among professing Christians. We are not surprised when we see those who have no higher objects of adoration bowing down to wealth and luxury; but we are surprised, yea, and deeply grieved, to see so little outward difference between them and the followers of Jesus, in so much connected with the arrangement of their establishments, and the splendour of their furniture and dress. How justly might He, whose disciples we profess ourselves, and who has left for our imitation the noblest example of self-denial and of victory over the world, upbraid us, and say, "What do ye more than others?"

CHAPTER III.

REMARKS ON THE EVILS WHICH EXIST IN SOCIETY, AND THE MEANS ADAPTED FOR THEIR REMOVAL.

THE title of this chapter is so comprehensive, as almost to involve the charge of presumption against the author; but we must not indolently shrink from the contemplation of a subject, because we find it beyond our powers to embrace the whole of it at once. It is by the careful induction of particulars that knowledge must be gradually acquired; and it is by the diligent exertions of the friends of virtue that the cause of humanity must be advanced.

Ignorance and idleness, with the vice and poverty to which they lead, may be considered as the grand evils of society, and education and employment must be the remedy. Let us not look upon any artificial evil as irremediable.

The Creator has not abandoned his creatures to the mazes of error, but has provided for them a guide, which, if they faithfully follow, will assuredly lead them to happiness ; and it is from our neglect of those governing principles which revelation has opened to us that evil has so extensively prevailed. That to prevent is easier than to cure is an axiom so common, that it almost ceases to impress us with its wisdom ; but while we acknowledge its truth, we neglect to act on its dictates. Foresight is an attribute of Deity, which man, when formed in His image, was in a certain measure endowed with. The animal enjoys or suffers the *present* ; but the human lord of creation is encouraged to look forward to the *future*. He is not, he cannot be insensible to the fact, that the acts of to-day may have an influence on every morrow of his existence ; and if he neglect to profit by the passing moment, he may have cause during his future years to lament his negligence. The sentiment of Shakspeare is true philosophy as well as elegant poetry,

“ There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ; .

Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows."

Such a golden opportunity for renovating by sure, but certain means, the constitution of society, is, by the wisdom of the Almighty, put into the hands of man, by the ordinance that every creature begins life as an infant; and the strongest feelings of nature are all directed on the part of the parent to watchfulness, and on the part of the child to trust and imitation. The *youthful* mind is like the plastic clay, which yields to impression, and takes the form stamped upon it. The mind of *man* is like the clay hardened in the fire, which is indeed capable of being worked painfully by sharp instruments, or of being broken in pieces by violence; but the time is for ever gone when its essential character can be altered. It is plain, then, that if we would impress with the stamp of virtue the mind of man, we must begin in childhood. Education must be the grand engine of national advancement, and religion the presiding hand which must direct it. It has been too much the custom of philosophers, falsely so called, to bestow science without Christianity,—unmindful of the danger of giving force without

direction. But the imparting of knowledge is not the whole, or even the chief part of education. The inculcation of principles, the formation of habits, the control of passion, form the basis of a moral teaching, which is far more important to the child, and far more imperative on the guardians of youth, than to impart the results of human learning. We must cultivate the understanding, and give to our pupil, by the energetic exercise of all his faculties, the power of acquiring knowledge for himself. We must not only fill his mind with the thoughts of others, but teach him to think for himself. It will be of little use to read to the young a lecture against the indulgence of passion, unless we establish a balance of power between the propensities and the moral sentiments, and by the cultivation of the intellectual powers give to reason her rightful supremacy. But we are painfully reminded alike by the records of the past, as by the experience of the present time, that mere human efforts are inefficient to accomplish that renovation of society which the philosopher has desired, and the poet dreamt of, as the golden age of the world. The experiment of making man wise by earthly wisdom has been laboriously

tried, and has too often failed, to hold out much hope for the future. The infusion of a new principle is necessary; the impulse of a superior power is essential to control the evil nature of the human heart. The universal diffusion of Christianity among every class of the community is the only sure method of reform; and, to bring this restorative principle into effectual action, the young must be made Christians in heart and practice, as well as in name. A solemn responsibility rests on the teachers of youth. They must be pious characters themselves, or we cannot hope (humanly speaking) that their pupils will become such. They must be men of prayer; for without the Divine blessing, we cannot hope that their work will prosper.

But ignorance and idleness, though the most prolific sources of the mischiefs which exist in society, are not its only sources.—Luxury surely leads to deterioration in the manners of a people. To trade, England owes her riches; but to trade, she also owes her luxury; and history bears witness to the solemn fact, that luxury is the parent of sin and the precursor of judgment: “pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idle-

ness," have drawn down the wrath of heaven on many a proud city. Tyre, whose merchants were princes, and her traffickers the honourable of the earth, is now a rock to spread nets on; and Babylon, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency, is swept with the besom of destruction, and blotted from the earth. But we hope better things for our beloved country; and believe, that as she has in the blessed Gospel a principle of vitality within her, her existence may yet be extended; and by the Divine favour she may be made a blessing to the whole habitable world. But to make her this, her people, one and all, must arise and exert themselves,—they must listen to the voice of God and obey the commands of the Most High,—they must put away iniquity from their dwellings, and sin from before their eyes;—they must cease to do evil, and learn to do well,—and each man in his vocation, whether it be a vocation of honourable command or of useful labour, must godly and quietly serve God and seek to benefit his neighbour. To the enlightened spirits of our age the cause of humanity is intrusted: He who has bestowed upon them superior power and superior intelligence, demands of them the exer-

cise of these commanding talents. In no age of the world were there more favourable opportunities for improvement. Put forth then, ye mighty minds, the full energy of your faculties; but remember who has bestowed them, and use them to His glory. He beholds your exertions, and marks the motives which lead to them. He registers in the records of Eternity the evil and the good done by those who, like you, are endowed with the richest treasure which Omnipotence can bestow. He remembers—though you may forget—the early prodigality, which has squandered in selfish enjoyment the powers of mind, the gifts of fortune, and the common but responsible possession of time. Trifle then no longer with opportunity,—that golden key to success,—but open your eyes to behold the wretchedness of your fellow creatures, and your hearts to pity them. And surely there is misery enough in society to call forth the pity of the most unfeeling. How many families may be found among the crowded population of our large cities who are suffering the extremity of want, thrown out of work, perhaps, by some depression in trade? Those only who have visited the lanes and alleys of our

manufacturing towns, know the state of destitution to which their inmates are reduced, when sufficiency of employment is not to be found. Many are the evils arising from that interruption of regular occupation, which is so frequently connected with the extensive manufacturing system of the present day. The same large demand for the work of the artificer cannot be expected to continue without fluctuation ; and when it ceases, the poverty which ensues has often led to scenes of seditious violence which have outraged social order.

But there is another and a worse evil connected with the factory system, which must not be passed over. Would that humanity could raise her voice so loud as to pierce the hearts of those whose pursuit of gain has made them thoughtless of the wrongs of the helpless children, who are obliged to labour beyond their strength, and for an undue time in factories ! The slavery of the colonies has met with its appropriate meed of reprobation, and freedom has been granted to the black ;—but what freedom have our factory children ?—England *has* her slaves, even on her own free soil.

“ Th’ indignant spirit mourns so base a part
Acted by men who force the infant throng,
From morn to lengthened eve, unceasingly
To toil, and toil ; the holiday of life,
With them past by, ere scarce it is begun.
Before the lisp of infancy be past,
They waste their tender strength, not in the hours
When health and labour join fraternity,
But by protracted midnight services,
Assailed by languor, loathsomeness, disease,—
Till death, the friend of misery, close the scene.”*

What must be the moral effect produced on that large portion of our population, who are engaged so unceasingly during the tender years of childhood in works, which if they are not necessarily unhealthy (which it is to be feared they too often are) yet afford no exercise for the intellectual faculties, and crush by the surest means the moral feelings. Continued labours which exhaust the youthful frame, together with constant fatigue and diminished rest, must lay the foundation for disease and death. But suppose the best, suppose that health is preserved, and life is spared, what becomes of the immortal soul? How is *this* educated for that Eternity that awaits it? It requires but lit-

* Joseph Cottle.

the knowledge of our nature to be convinced that the endurance of misery in childhood, will throw a blight over our future years ; that those who, in helpless infancy, have been treated with cruelty by their masters, will themselves grow hardened ; and unless, of an unusually kind disposition, will, when become men, exhibit a cruel disposition towards others. Again, this system of employing children from such an early age, withdraws them from the sympathies of home, and the softening influence of parental tenderness. But here we may be asked, what—What parental tenderness can you expect from those who are themselves unceasingly engaged in manufactories ? What domestic sympathy can you expect when the domestic hearth is abandoned for the factory ? The very question carries its own answer. How direful must be the moral influence of a system which thus destroys the charities of life, and sacrifices the souls and bodies of a people at the shrine of a golden idol !

Let not Christian England longer remain under this reproach ; but let *law* do what individual *mercy* will not do :—let the helpless orphan be protected :—and let not the parent

whose heart has been indurated by this system, be allowed to sacrifice his children, to procure additional indulgence for himself. SADLER, the patron of the unfortunate,—the friend of humanity,—has gone to receive the crown of immortal glory: but let not his example be lost:—let the legislature of our country look into this crying evil:—let them enforce the laws which do exist, or supply them if deficient;—and let the advocates of religious education exert all their energies to snatch from perdition the victims of selfish avarice. Would that we had eloquence to plead the sacred cause of mercy so powerfully as to excite a general feeling of compassion for these poor sufferers, and rouse to vigorous action those who have the ability to relieve them.

It is because the prosperous do not consider *how* the rest of their fellow creatures live, that they do not relieve them; but let the happy possessors of this world's good, visit the abodes of wretchedness and listen to the tale of sorrow; and the compassion which exists in their own bosoms will prompt them to make those sacrifices for its relief, which the reports of others would have failed to extort.

If the great landed proprietors, particularly of Ireland, were to dwell among their own people, it is morally impossible that so much of want could exist. Did the inheritor of paternal acres—did the possessors of mercantile treasure,—reflect, that they have a duty to perform to their inferiors,—that they were born to some higher end than to consume the fruits of the earth, and spend in selfish enjoyment the riches with which they are intrusted, the evils of life would be lessened; and we should not see so much that is possible in the great work of social amelioration, left unaccomplished.

But some, who admit the necessity of such a moral renovation among the mass of our people, may ask in despair, “How can these things be?” We answer, let us not be discouraged in the great attempt; for we know that in every good work which is undertaken in subservience to the Divine will, we have the help of One that is Mighty. Archimedes boasted that he could move the earth, if he had a place to stand on that was not in the earth; and in the task of moving the minds of the luxurious possessors of wealth and rank to deny themselves for the benefit of their poor countrymen, we are better off

than the mathematician of Syracuse;—for we have a foundation on which to plant our engines, which is not of this world, but of the next. Revelation supplies the knowledge, and the Holy Spirit supplies the force, which can alone move the affections of the worldly, and “turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.” Confident as we may be, that in the wisdom of God and the diligence of man, there does exist a remedy for every artificial evil, let us sedulously set ourselves to find it out, and instead of sitting down in indolent despondency to weep for the miseries of our fellow beings, let us arise and seek to apply those divine principles of moral renovation, which Christianity supplies, and employ that power, which, like the fabled stone of the philosopher, will by its heavenly alchemy turn all which it touches into gold.

But though there is much in every part of our land which claims the exertion of the benevolent, there is in the Sister Island a more imperative demand for succour. The perpetual recurrence of a degree of want which too often approaches to famine,—the frequent perpetration of acts of violence and scenes of horror, which

make us ask in astonishment, "Is Ireland a Christian country?" — challenges attention: Government may make laws, and punish, by the strong arm of power, the transgressors of them. Justice must not bear the balance and the sword in vain; but *mercy* must also do her part. Mercy in its most extensive and evangelical sense will alone be able to work that moral change which will lead to order and to peace. This mercy must be exercised by individuals.— How many of the children of a soil blessed with fertility, are pining and dying in want; ignorant of the true source of consolation, they have sought to drown in inebriating draughts the sense of misery. Drunkenness has grown into a habit, and plunged in guilt and poverty a large mass of the population of Ireland. The want of true knowledge has given them up to degrading superstition. The nobles of their land have, in too many instances, abandoned them, and spent in foreign capitals the riches for which their peasantry have toiled. London offers more attractions to the votaries of pleasure, or the competitors for fame, than the paternal mansion or remote estate of the Irish lord:—he may desire that his tenantry be not

neglected—that his place should be supplied by his steward,—but will the hireling feel like the true master?—Will the man whose sole object is to get wealth, and drain the country of all that can be got, have the same tender regard for the welfare of the dependant,—the same sympathy for the necessities of the poor labourer?

Even suppose that the kindly feelings of the possessor of the soil were dormant, that he had no generous longings of soul to make others as happy as himself; yet the very fact of his living in the land of his forefathers, of his spending his revenue in the locality from whence it is derived, would, in spite of every counteracting influence, give an impulse to industry, an encouragement to diligence, a market to trade, which must work a mighty change in the condition of a peasantry. If we can make man happy, we go far towards making him good: if we can set him above bodily want, he will have time to think of mental improvement. We must supply him with that Christian knowledge, before the light of which superstition will shrink away. How can this be so effectually done as by the proprietors of the land living on those estates

which supply their revenue? If the example of such men as Lord Roden, in the care and instruction of the poor, were generally followed, how much good might be hoped for in Ireland? Religious education would be more generally diffused, and habits of industry, sobriety, and economy would be encouraged. Example and influence would have a continually extending effect in civilizing the community; and the happiness of the noble would, in its truest sense, be promoted, no less than the advantage of the tenant. The affection of the dependants would in time be won by the kindness of the patron; and love, as well as interest, would reunite in indissoluble union those members of society that have been so long severed.

Legislation may do much, but individual exertion and individual example may do more, to compose the troubles of Ireland. Let no one be discouraged by the apparent greatness of the undertaking, but exert himself to do good in the circle of which he is the centre. Motion, when once communicated, is indefinitely extended; so example, once exhibited, may have imitators who will communicate its influence to the widest circumference. A stone dropped into the still

water touches by actual contact but a small spot in that glassy lake; but it gives activity to numberless waves, which "form their circles, round succeeding round, each wider than the last." Others may complain that they have so limited a control over their fellow-creatures, that exertion is useless; the extent of their possessions is too small to give scope for the trial of those plans of improvement which they would gladly see begun. Thus those powers become paralysed by inactivity, which, if put forth in vigorous exercise, might impress a character on the population they dwell among, and call into animation some dormant spirit which slumbers in the shade of unnoticed obscurity. Let us not estimate the value of our benevolent endeavours by the measure of their apparent success. Every virtuous exertion of Christian principles is registered by Him, who, to encourage such exertions in His followers, has graciously declared, that at the final day of reckoning He will regard the good done to the least of His brethren as done to Himself.

It cannot be pleaded in excuse for idleness, that there are no examples of generous self-denial, or no opportunities for doing good. Nu-

merous societies exist which have for their object the Scriptural education of the Irish poor; and if those Christian philanthropists who are devoting their time to this great object were adequately supported, we might hope to see this suffering people brought back to order and happiness. It is the promise of the Almighty that He will dwell in the midst of His people; but if He thus dwell among us, will it not be to mark with terrible exactness the deeds of the oppressor, as well as to sustain with His holy arm the cause of mercy? Those who, in dependence on the Divine blessing, are seeking to publish the glad tidings of peace to the poor, and to diffuse the light of the Gospel to the people who are sitting in darkness, may humbly look for the blessing of an ever-present God; but those who, instead of helping this good work, are trying to hinder it, and drawing from the tenant a rent that is ruinously high, can expect only displeasure and punishment from the great Father of mankind, who has bestowed on some of His children riches, that they might employ them in relieving their poorer brethren. Can we suppose that the talent which is misused or neglected will be continued to the un-

worthy holder? Will it not be taken from him, and given to another? We are too apt to forget that this world and all that it contains are the Lord's,—that the silver and the gold are His,—and that He will demand at a future day a strict account how these gifts have been employed. Let it be our care to use them for the glory of the Giver, and not by selfish avarice or luxurious profusion to work out for ourselves a tremendous reckoning—an everlasting punishment. The landlord is but as a steward for the tenant; the noble cannot live without the peasant; and both have a duty to perform. Is it consistent with that duty that the one should live in luxury, and the other starve?^{*} Is it

* To prove that this is no exaggerated statement, I quote the words of Mr. Henry D. Inglis, in his description of Limerick. See "Ireland in 1834," vol. i. p. 303.—"Some of the abodes I visited were garrets, some were cellars, some were hovels on the ground-floor, situated in narrow yards or alleys. The filth of these places cannot be exceeded. In at least three-fourths of the hovels which I entered there was no furniture of any description save an iron pot,—no table, no chair, no bench, no bedstead,—two, three, or four little bundles of straw, with perhaps one or two scanty and ragged mats, were rolled up in the corners, unless where these beds were found occupied. The inmates were some of them old, crooked, and diseased; some

consistent with that self-denial which is essential in the Christian, that the follower of Jesus should wring from the peasant the utmost penny, that he may have the means to pamper those appetites which it is his duty to subdue? Perhaps the fashionable pleasure-seeking noble may profess his ignorance of any extortion, and care little whether he be considered a follower of Jesus; but if he be thus indifferent alike to the claims of benevolence or piety, how can he be saved? Will wealth smooth his dying pillow? Will rank shield him from the scrutiny of the younger, but emaciated, and surrounded by starving children; some were sitting on the damp ground, some standing, and many were unable to rise from their little straw heaps. In scarcely one hovel could I find even a potato. In one which I entered, I noticed a small opening leading into an inner room. I lighted a bit of paper at the embers of a turf which lay in the chimney, and looked in. It was a cellar wholly dark, and about twelve feet square; two bundles of straw lay in two corners; on one sat a bed-ridden woman, on another lay two naked children,—literally naked,—with a torn rag of some kind thrown over them both. But I saw worse even than this. In a cellar which I entered, and which was almost quite dark, and slippery with damp, I found a man sitting on a little sawdust. He was naked; he had not even a shirt—a filthy and ragged mat was round him. This man was a living skeleton—the bones all but protruded through the skin: he was literally starving."

Judge, or the condemnation of the wicked?—Do they consider that they are accountable and immortal beings?—Will ignorance of the oppression of their stewards save them from the punishment of the oppressor?—that ignorance is in itself a sin, and one sin can never be an excuse for another.—Do the accumulators of this world's wealth, do the votaries of this world's pleasures, really believe the words of inspiration?—or do they explain away those woes pronounced upon the rich with which the Scriptures abound? Surely, if the blessed inhabitants of heaven are sensible of the dealings of men, it is enough to make the angels weep to see the toil with which those immortal beings who were destined to share their joys seek to heap up the shining dust of earth, and, forgetting their high privileges, satisfy the longings of an intelligent creature with the silver, and the gold, and the glitter of this world's pomp. Would that we had a voice of more than mortal power, to tell to the thoughtless noble and the exacting master, that “for all these things God will bring them into judgment!” We know that it is only the sunbeam that can thaw the frozen sea; so it is alone the bright beams of Gospel light

which can melt the iciness of man's heart, and incline him to turn from idols to serve the living God.

The way to improve Ireland is to evangelize her people; to induce the followers of pleasure to deny themselves* for the benefit of their de-

* To prove the necessity there is for retrenchment and self-denial among the upper classes in Ireland, I again quote the words of Mr. Inglis, vol. ii. p. 24.—“ The same contrasts are exhibited here (Galway) as elsewhere in Ireland, between the upper and lower classes ; and I fear the line of separation is not entirely confined to externals. I had an opportunity of conversing with many landowners here and in the neighbourhood, and I regretted to find among them so little sympathy with the condition of the poor. I also found amongst them generally the greatest terror for any legislative provision for the poor. One great cause of this, and of the oppressions of landlords throughout the west of Ireland, is the improvidence of the upper classes. So many of them are distressed men, that their own necessities force them to be hard on tenants, and prompt them to grasp at the highest rent offered. Thus every class which lives by land becomes necessitous ; improvements, where every shilling is wanted by the farmer to pay his rent, and by the landlord to keep his head above water, are impossible ; and the labour market being over-stocked, the necessities of the poor are taken advantage of ; and the services of the labourer (who frequently works fourteen hours a-day) are paid at the rate of sixpence, and even of fivepence,—which, during a part of the time I was in Ireland, scarcely sufficed to purchase one stone of potatoes.”

peasants, and to quit that broad way along which they are walking, to enter that narrow path which, though strait, is direct, and, though at times laborious, leads to everlasting rest.

Another extensive class of our population which calls for the care of the religious instructor, is the *sailor*. The last twenty years have witnessed a great change in the situation of a large section of our people. England has for a long season been blessed with peace; the veterans who survived the deadly conflict, which by the Divine favour placed Great Britain above her enemies, have most of them sunk to glorious repose; and the greater part of the junior combatants for their country's honour are grown old in peace, and have become amalgamated with the mass of her people. The sword is laid by, we hope, for a long season; but the arm that wielded it so successfully may again be nerved for the conflict, should invasion threaten to destroy our altars and our homes. But we must not forget that the obligations which we owe to the sailor are as great as those which are justly due to the soldier. When the fleets of hostile powers, when the armaments of Infidel France threatened our coasts, the bravery of the British seaman defended us from harm. The conquerors in

Aboukir, Trafalgar, and Algiers, have won immortal honour. And, if we deem him worthy our esteem who saves the life of a single citizen, what laurels are not due to those who braved the stormy ocean and the cannon's roar to save their country, and perilled their own lives to win for us that peace which we now enjoy? Had it not been for our navy, what would have been the condition of England? Probably a province of France; a tributary to the Corsican tyrant. Where, then, would the liberty we so justly prize have found an asylum? Our beloved land would have been deluged with the blood of her children; and we must have begged for the exercise of our religion and the existence of our churches at the foot of the conqueror. Let us bless God that such horrors have been averted; and let us not be ungrateful to those who under Him were the means of our deliverance. The welfare of the sailor, both as concerns things temporal and things eternal, has strong claims on the Christian philanthropist; and the important question—how this can best be advanced? has not received the attention it demands. Their situation debars them from sharing those religious advantages which we en-

joy. The opportunities which others have of receiving instruction, and of gaining knowledge by experience, are denied to them; and, by consequence, when they return to their Fatherland from their long voyages, they fall an easy prey to depravity and cunning. But in a country which employs so many thousands of men on the ocean in trade, the sailor in peace, as well as in war, is an important individual. For the luxuries which crown our tables, they encounter the dangers of the deep; to bring us intelligence from our relatives and friends in foreign lands, they plough the trackless ocean; to obtain for us the precious metals which form the medium of exchange, and the gems which adorn our fair countrywomen, the sailor leaves his home, his father's house, his native land, and exposes his life to the hazards of navigation. Let us consider the obligations we owe to them, and seek to compensate their privations, and to reward their cares, by administering to their wants, and providing for their comforts. But, though much remains to be done, something has been effected for their relief by the efforts of the humane. Happily there does exist an institution, which, if supported and extended as it

deserves to be, will go far towards accomplishing the great end proposed,—“The Sailor’s Home,”—in London. The seaman there meets with shelter and food, and is provided with those comforts which entitle it to be designated by the name of “*home*.” He is there placed out of the reach of those who are ever ready to seize upon him for the sake of gain. He there has the opportunity of hearing the message of salvation from the lips of a Christian minister; and of preparing, by the reception of the Gospel, for that eternal state to which he may be hurried by the storm or the shipwreck. Let the friends of humanity weigh well the advantages of such an asylum for the sailor, who has no domestic hearth to receive him after his dangerous toils, no disinterested friend to welcome his return.

But it is not in the metropolis alone that such “homes” are needed; they should be established on a large scale in the great naval and commercial towns on our coasts. Let the benevolent spirits of our age plead for the neglected sailor, and provide alike for the comfort of the body, and for the salvation of the soul. The sailor is also important as regards the great

work of missions ; when we view him in connexion with the inhabitants of distant islands, or the dwellers on foreign coasts. Sailors are perhaps the only class of men belonging to Christian England who visit those remote countries ; and the natives will surely judge from *them* of the religion and morals of our country. We are thankful to say that some of them do know the truth, and fear God. But are we satisfied with the opinions which foreigners will thus in most instances be led to form of us ? Is the crew of a trading vessel the best specimen of British character?—surely not. The success of the missionary is immeasurably impeded by the counteracting influence of such men ; for, as all bear the *name of Christians*, the unenlightened heathen will form an unfavourable judgment of the religion which they see disgraced by the immoralities of the only professors of it whom they know. The greatness of this evil demands attention, and calls for reformation. Schools for the young, in those towns whence our traders draw their crews, are above all things necessary. The pious care of those who seek to train in habits of religion and virtue those children who will in future years man our ships, will not be

lost ; the good seed may lie dormant for a time, but will in the end yield fruit ; and were our sailors possessed with an evangelical spirit, such is the extent of British commerce and of British navigation, that the truth might be universally diffused, and the Gospel be preached in every nation under heaven. For the accomplishment of all great objects, great exertions must be made : and we should not despair of seeing these noble undertakings succeed, could the pious zeal which animates so many of our countrymen in the sacred cause of missions be infused into the bosoms of those who are now wholly engaged in the accumulation of wealth or the pursuit of pleasure. Revelation encourages us to believe that a time will come when evangelical light will shine upon this benighted world with increased splendour, and “the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.” For the accomplishment of this glorious promise the prayers of the Christian Church daily ascend ; but our petition that God’s “kingdom” may “come,” must be seconded by our endeavours ; that the ignorant of our own land, the spiritually destitute of the colonies, the heathen of foreign shores, may be

taught the blessedness of becoming the subjects of that kingdom.

In closing a chapter dedicated to a review of the evils which exist in society, a few words must be said on a most important subject. Britons have grown too numerous for the islands which bear their name ; the teeming population of England, of Scotland, and of Ireland, have overflowed the narrow limits of the land that nursed them, and this sea-girt kingdom of the West has become a hive of nations, that has sent forth her swarms to people the very opposite ends of the earth. The language, the laws, the customs of England, her manufactures, her manners, and her learning, have been carried to the new and old worlds. The forests of North America have been levelled to afford locations for her superabundant inhabitants ; the fertile soil of Hindostan has been made to yield its produce at her command ; the tropical luxuriance of Western India has contributed to her wealth ; and the grassy plains of New Holland have been peopled by her enterprising colonists. Vast continents are now overspread by those who speak in our own language. English is the mother tongue of mil-

lions of the human race. But is the spirit of our national religion as prevailing as our national speech? Would that it were! Would that the Canadian settler and the Australian colonist enjoyed the religious advantages which we possess! Would that the apprentices in the West Indies, the convicts in our penal settlements, the native servants of our fellow-subjects in India, could hear the offers of Divine mercy, and be made partakers of the Bread of Life! Who is there among us that has not some friend or brother in a foreign land? The common feelings of humanity prompt us to seek the welfare of our fellow-creatures, and to supply their want out of our abundance. If we are thus led by compassion to minister to their temporal necessities, shall we not be led by Christian benevolence to relieve that worst of all distress, a famine of the word of God? Those who are nourished by spiritual consolations in our own happy country will surely lend their ear to the complaints of their relatives and fellow-countrymen who are destitute of Gospel privileges abroad. They hear not the sound of "the church-going bell:" no voice of a Christian shepherd offers to them instruc-

tion. The feast of redeeming mercy is not spread for them: they must endure the privations of half-civilized society, without the softening influence of "the communion of saints." The colonist must struggle with poverty, uncheered by the voice of ministerial sympathy; the tie that binds him to the wife of his bosom is unsanctified by the blessing of the priest; the child of his affections has no one to present it to the Saviour,—no servant of the Most High is there found to receive the lambs of the flock, or to plunge in the baptismal font the new-born infant: the beloved parent must go down to the grave without being soothed by the prayers of a venerated pastor; and, when all that remains of the friend dear as our own soul is committed to earth, no holy benediction consecrates the soil where he lies,—no religious rite hallows the funeral solemnities.

Can we endure the thought that those who have shared with us the lessons of childhood, and joined in our infantine gambols by our father's hearth, should thus be abandoned? Can we bear the idea that those with whom we have taken sweet counsel, and walked into the house of God as friends, should thus be debarred those

Christian privileges which we so justly prize, and be left to perish in a foreign land for want of the Bread of Life,—that knowledge of salvation which we have it in our power to send them, did we but exert in their behalf the talents with which we are intrusted? “ If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold! we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?” Prov. xxiv. 11. 12.

CHAPTER IV.

ON EDUCATION.

A GENERAL reference has been already made to education, as the grand means of national improvement; but the subject is so important that it demands a more particular examination. We have now arrived at a time when the question so long agitated as to the utility and expediency of universal education is well-nigh set at rest. But had this not been the case, the people would not have waited the deliberations of their rulers: learning they would have; and the only question that now remains is, how it may best be given? We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there is at work in the present day a spirit of infidelity and rebellion against constituted authorities. The advocates of these deadly principles are ever ready to avail themselves of the prevailing thirst for knowledge to

influence the minds of their countrymen; and too often, together with popular information, instil into the minds of youth the poison of a false philosophy. To combat this growing evil, the friends of good government and order have no other course left than to take into their own hands the mighty instrument of public instruction, and seek to direct its working. Knowledge, by means of printed books, is daily spreading among the great mass of our population, and is thus giving to "*the people*" a degree of power and influence which they never could have possessed before the discovery of printing, and the general diffusion of the first elements of learning. Religion is the only means of rendering this power beneficial: Christianity alone can sanctify knowledge, and render its possessors a blessing to society.

If ever there was a period in the history of the world when religion was necessary to man, the *present* is that period. The recent discoveries of science, the profound views which the geologist and the astronomer have opened to the public, render it imperatively necessary that some sure rock of truth should be pointed out, on which the mind may rest, and from which it

may view the speculations of the philosopher, and the changing theories which pass across the horizon of science, and chase each other as the discovery of new facts, and the induction of new phenomena, give rise to changes which, though they may ultimately lead to truth, yet expose us for the present to the danger of error. How often may the mind be startled by some fresh and unexpected peep into the immense laboratory of nature; and, feeling its own littleness, shrink from the grasp of such mighty calculations, and be depressed with fear lest a Being of inconceivable power may, in the immensity of his avocations, and the extent of His empire, overlook the insignificant inhabitant of some remote spot in this little world, which we call earth! What, under such a feeling of apprehension, can minister to the mind such consolation as the assurance which God in His infinite knowledge of the wants of His creatures has mercifully revealed—that He regards mankind as His children, and encourages them to look to Him as their Father, yea, even as their friend? What can give such sweet satisfaction to the doubting, tempest-tossed inquirer, as the intelligence that the mighty Lord of the Universe has

condescended to take on Himself the human form,—to become man's Saviour, and, by His death, to win for every child of Adam a title to immortal life? If we have any value for the souls which the Lord Jesus suffered to redeem, let us observe his last charge to the Apostle St. Peter, and show our love to the Saviour by feeding the lambs of His flock.

There has not for years been a more important step taken for the improvement of the rising generation than the institution of Infant Schools. We cannot calculate the amount of good which such establishments, when they shall have become general, are calculated to produce. The infants, who are now receiving moral teaching and intellectual cultivation, will become the parents of the next generation, and will, we hope, impart to their children the advantages which they have themselves received. We trust, by the Divine blessing on our exertions, that a higher tone of moral feeling, a more general developement of the intellectual faculties, a more prevailing regard to the sanctions of religion, will be diffused among our people; and when once the parents of this land are really and truly christianized, society will

advance in improvement in a continually accelerating ratio. The most likely method of forming the mind of man to religion and virtue is to begin early,—to engage the young in the morning of their days to “Remember their Creator;” and, before the natural evil of the human heart has time to gain strength by exercise, to bring into action those renovating principles which are its legitimate antagonists. We value freedom so highly and so justly ourselves, that we should regard it as the heaviest calamity were our children to be brought up to slavery. Yet what slavery is so shameful as the slavery of sin, and the dominion of bad habits? The oppressor may command the body of his slave, but he cannot touch his soul; that may rejoice in immortal blessedness when it leaves its suffering tenement of clay: but death will bring no emancipation to the slave of his own vile passions; in life they have held him in disgraceful bondage, and in death they will deliver him over to the power of the great spiritual tyrant.

If we would snatch our beloved children from present misery and future punishment, we must teach them in childhood to tread the paths of

virtue; it must be our first endeavour, as soon as they become capable of distinguishing right from wrong, to habituate them to put a curb upon their desires, and to submit their wishes to reason. Obedience is the first lesson which an infant should be taught; and the neglect of this is the crying sin of the age. Of how many good-natured, but misjudging parents, particularly in the lower ranks of life, might it be said that the rebellion and self-will of their children brought “down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave!” What is the general character of that multitude of boys which throng the streets of our cities? Is it not stubborn self-will, an utter disregard of the admonitions of their parents, and a readiness and proneness to engage in any mischief that is within their power? How large a proportion of the offenders against the laws of their country are from the ranks of boyhood! How many of the most active agents in the satanic work of destruction during the riots in Bristol, in the year 1831, were boys! Who are ever the most ready to add to a crowd, and swell the uproar of seditious meetings? — boys. Who are they who most frequently require that the strong arm of

the police be exerted to maintain the public peace?—boys. Is this tolerable?—is this excusable in a Christian country, who boasts of her education and her schools? Let us not be quiescent under this growing evil,—an evil so pregnant with mischief that, if unchecked, the very foundations of society will be shaken, and the sword of public justice be bathed in the blood of juvenile offenders, to strike a salutary terror into the hearts of the young, and show to the parents of our country the tremendous consequences of the sin they have committed in allowing their children to grow hardened in disobedience.

The only means by which the public can supply the neglects of the parent, and administer that moral discipline which alone can tame the fierce spirits of our youth, is by well-conducted schools,—infant schools, daily schools, Sunday schools, schools of industry,—where Christianity can be early taught, and the heart brought into subjection to her commands. But these schools will be inefficient, and rather increase than diminish the evils they are intended to cure, if they are not animated by the encouragement, and regulated by the vigilant inspec-

tion, of the higher classes of society. It is not enough that the great man give his annual subscription, or even liberal donation, to such establishments. This is indeed commendable and necessary: but he must do something more,—he must give the weight of his authority. Influence and example are too extensive in their operation to be neglected in the great work of social reformation.

In the formation of schools it is of the utmost importance to select an able and pious master, who unites to kindness of disposition that most rare and valuable quality, *the art of governing*. The power to control others is the very soul of authority; and without authority no school can be kept in order. Some minds have that strength by which they bend others to their will, and maintain discipline with little assistance from corporal punishments or artificial rewards, both of which should be resorted to as rarely as possible. So vitally important to the success of a school is it that the master or mistress of it should possess this valuable quality, that no pains should be thought too great to obtain one so endowed, and no stipend too liberal to secure such superintendence. The

education of youth is far too important to be intrusted to well-meaning imbecility. Spirit and energy in these days are necessary to push on any cause. The advocates of evil principles are careful in the selection of fit agents for their purpose, and spare no endeavours to secure the help of talented men. Let not then the Christian philanthropist overlook such means of success ; and let it not be said in regard to education, that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." The prosperity and stability of a government depend on the talents and integrity of its ministers; and the success of a school will depend on the talents and integrity of the master and teachers. No unfit person should be permitted to take even a subordinate part in the instruction of youth. Above all, let no private favour to a deserving but incompetent individual, — no pity for an indigent candidate, ever tempt the governors of charity-schools to prefer the emolument of the *one* to the advantage of the *many*, and thus compromise the interests of the scholars by the choice of an inefficient master. It is indeed a fatal mistake, when, wishing to do an act of kindness, we seek

to relieve the wants of distressed dependants by placing them in situations of solemn responsibility, which they have neither the moral power nor the intellectual superiority adequately to fill.

An important desideratum in our public establishments, and one which hitherto appears to have escaped general observation, is the want of some appropriate school in which those persons who wish to maintain themselves by public instruction might receive that training which is necessary to qualify them for their important office. We have colleges for our clergy, and academies for our military;—every profession and every trade has its own particular course of preparatory study;—and shall we have no avenue to knowledge open to the deserving, but humble, aspirant for the situation of master or mistress in our national and charity schools? The demand for such persons in the present day is great, and much difficulty is experienced by those who are intrusted with the formation or management of schools, in obtaining the services of those *properly* qualified to conduct the education of the poor. Such deficiencies can only be adequately supplied by some central

academy, where young men may enjoy the advantages of judicious instruction, both as to the formation of their own characters, and the particular systems of school management which may be required. When gratuitous education first was recommended, its advocates promised society great advantages from the proposed measure; and hoped for great things if it were universally adopted. The public must now judge of the effects of the measure. But why should it be in any degree doubtful whether it has produced the result intended? Why is the success of so salutary a medicine rather anticipated than enjoyed?—Can it be that it was not rightly administered?—When we would find arguments in favour of national schools, we are obliged to look round for examples of their beneficial effects; and thankful we are to say, that bright examples may be found of many who have diligently profited by their advantages;—but by this time the force of evidence in their favour should be overwhelming. It ought now to be quite unnecessary to enlarge upon the theory of education, or expend our eloquence in drawing pictures of that golden age of improvement which it is calculated to

advance. A mighty engine is put into our hands, and it is our own fault if it fail to work that moral renovation which it is endowed with powers to effect. Can we doubt that religious education is intended by the Almighty to be the means, in human hands, which He will graciously condescend to bless, for the temporal and eternal welfare of the human race? Let us not rest satisfied that the anticipated benefit should remain yet future. Let not our fervent desires for the improvement of the young go down with us to the grave ungratified. Let not the soil we have sought to cultivate become fallow when we are no more, because we have taken no pains to encourage a race of labourers who may, in years to come, reap the golden harvests for which we have prepared the soil. Philosophers complain that the advancement of society has been retarded, because the discoveries of one generation have been lost to the next, and the improvements of the fathers have not been perfected by the children. Such must be the case, if the methods of imparting knowledge, and of training the youthful mind, are suffered to perish with the inventor. An individual may have attained to eminence in

his calling, and his instructions may have been blessed with success; but if he is a solitary labourer, his beneficial influence will end with his life; the great field of general improvement will remain little the better for his exertions, and the spot that he has laboured to render fertile may relapse into barrenness, because he failed to impart to others the secret art of successful cultivation. The only method by which the great edifice of social order can be raised to that height of perfection and symmetry which its founders designed, is that every successive race of workmen transmit their knowledge and their discoveries to their successors; who, thus becoming wise by the experience of their ancestors, will gain some step, and add some beauty every year, and complete, by the aggregate improvements of many generations, that vast design which the short span of human life is inadequate to accomplish. If some central school for the teachers of youth were founded on a liberal scale, and diligently superintended by those of authority and influence in society, it would tend to raise the character of masters and mistresses of schools; and a supply of these much-required officers might be constantly

maintained. They should not be suffered to go out upon their labours without having passed an examination by suitable judges, and received testimonials as to their fitness. They should be encouraged to keep up a correspondence with the central board, and be required from time to time to make reports of their progress, and to notice any plans which they may have been led to adopt from a well-founded conviction of their utility. Thus the experience of each individual would be recorded for the benefit of the whole society ; and each member would be encouraged to advance, and animated in his endeavours, by the certainty that every step he made in the good work would advance his fellows in the common path of efficiency and usefulness. School teaching ought to be regarded as a profession, and a profession which repaid with a suitable salary those who attained to eminence in it. And it is mainly owing to our neglect in this important matter,—to our habit of intrusting the care of schools to those who could find no other means of subsistence,—to our carelessness in not requiring a certain degree of moral power and intellectual developement in the candidates for these public

situations,—that the success of gratuitous education has been so equivocal, and its political expediency, with some, still doubtful.

The description given by Dr. Mayo of what should be the character of an infant school teacher, may be some guide to those who are seeking for fit persons to take part in the religious education of youth, either in daily or Sunday schools. “ Let him be some man of God, whose heart, warm with the consciousness of God’s forgiving love, delights to dwell on his Redeemer’s goodness, and prompts him with the genuine warmth of actual experience to be telling of his salvation from day to day. Let him be one who will not tire of that theme, because it is the truth he lives on himself, and which he feels to be fruitful of peace and joy. Orthodoxy of opinion, though necessary, is not sufficient; there must be a breathing vitality about his religion, an animating energy about his piety, that shall make him, with God’s blessing, the spiritual father of a numerous race. He *must* be a man of *prayer*: no human power can accomplish the work before him; he must look—and steadfastly look, to those everlasting hills, from whence cometh his help. With

prayer must he gird himself for his work; in the spirit of prayer must he carry it on; in the incense of prayer must the offering of his day's exertion ascend before the throne."—"Teachers should strictly examine themselves whether their principal aim is to bring their pupils to Christ Jesus; whether they are seeking, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to develope their intellectual faculties in strict subordination to their moral and religious improvement."*

But infant schools, however beneficial in their tendency, are, like all other human institutions, subject to imperfection, and require vigilant inspection. It is not always easy in large and populous towns to procure a suitable locality for such an establishment. It is of the utmost consequence that the infants should not be crowded together in close rooms; and confinement in rooms, however spacious, should be carefully avoided. A large play-ground is essential. The open canopy of heaven should be the only roof to the child during the greatest part of the day in fine weather; and the umbrageous

* See "Practical remarks on Infant Education, by Dr. Mayo." A book which ought to be in the hands of all teachers of youth.

shade of stately trees should alone hide from his view that glorious sun, whose beams are alike the source of gladness and health to all animated nature. Familiarity with the works of the Creator is essential to the healthy development of the youthful mind. Happiness and liberty will prove the most genial soil for the vegetation of that seed of immortal origin, which, planted in the infant soul, is too often checked by the corrupting climate of the world, especially the world as it is found in the narrow alleys of great cities. The greatest pleasure to all young creatures is the exercise of their powers, and this renders it easy to amuse them. We must not pretend to dictate to the child how every hour of its young existence is to be employed, or bind down its wandering fancy to habitual attention. The sapling that waves to the wind will become a vigorous tree; while the twig that is bound to a stake will grow old in immaturity. The propensity which nature has implanted in the child to ever-varying posture and changeful movement is wisely ordered to bring into salutary exercise the muscles of the human frame; and the utmost care should be taken that teachers should not keep the infants

under their care too long, sitting upright upon forms. On the training and nursing of the infant, the health of the future man depends: and while we are seeking to impart to the youthful population of the land that best gift, a religious education, we must be careful that we do not overlook the responsibility which rests upon us to rear the children committed to our trust, as far as human means can go, to vigorous health and physical strength. It would be a beneficial exertion of Christian mercy to the little children, whom our Lord so tenderly encourages us to minister to, if some plain food were provided once in the day for the infants of the destitute poor, whose growth is often stinted for want of that nourishment which the parent is unable to provide. Though the teacher of infant schools must always remember that the most important part of his office is to form the dispositions of his scholars, to check what is evil, and to encourage what is amiable in their characters; yet he must not forget that their success and usefulness in future life will in a great measure depend on the cultivation of the intellectual powers. By this it is not meant that the mind of the child, while it is yet immature, should be over-

worked, or the memory loaded by a heap of words; but that due care should be taken to place before the young such objects as are calculated to fix their attention and excite ideas in their mind. Perception must be awakened, and the faculties exercised, but not fatigued. The perfection of the senses (which are the avenues of knowledge to the mind) is greatly dependant on their exercise in childhood; and the mercy of God has provided for the earliest years of man's life a perpetual source of enjoyment, in the sight of colour, form, and beauty, in the works of nature and of art.

The superintendence and care of schools affords, for young persons in the higher and middle ranks of life, a valuable opportunity of exercising Christian benevolence, and of acquiring experience; and thus the system of *gratuitous* religious education is calculated to confer essential benefit on the rich as well as the poor, and to train both in habits of piety and usefulness. Many excellent ministers of the gospel and zealous laymen have had their dormant energies roused and rightly directed by being placed in the Christian office of Sunday-school teacher, to impart the truths of the gospel to

the “ lambs of the flock;” and not a few have first felt their own hearts warmed to gratitude for the mercies of redemption while conversing with little children on the love of Christ to man. It will be a happy time when we shall see the sons and daughters of the noble and the wealthy engaged in these undertakings, and thus consecrating to the Great Lord of all, those gifts which He has so largely bestowed upon them. Pleasure may spread its snares for them, and promise them those delights which the world offers to its votaries ; but to the pure in heart, and to the elevated in mind, the path of usefulness will prove the path of happiness ;—they will value more “ the poor man’s prayer, the orphan’s tear, respect from the respected,” than the dissipation of crowded assemblies and the transient enjoyments of vanity and selfishness. The sincere believer, whatever may be his rank, will feel it no degradation to enter the cottages of the poor, to encourage their industry, to sympathise with their sufferings, to relieve their wants, and thus to imitate the example of the Saviour, “ who went about doing good.” But the superintendence of schools is but a part of the duty which every Christian owes to the younger members of

the community. He is bound to see that the children and youth of his own class in society may be the better for his example ; and that his influence, as far as it is felt, may draw them from the ways of sin, and lead them to the Redeemer. Children will naturally imitate the manners of their elders, and receive a tinge from the very sight of virtue or of vice. How solemn is the responsibility which lies on parents and guardians to preserve from the slightest taint of levity or irreligion the minds of those " little ones," to offend whom our Lord declares will be to risk a fearful punishment ! The ambition of a father will prompt him to educate his son for this world, and to spare no pains to fit him for an honourable station here. But let him consider that his son was born to fill a higher station than any this world can offer, even that of being an inheritor of heaven and a child of God. He must not forget that, as immortal beings, we are here only as scholars to learn the will of God, to prove our faith by our obedience, and, by passing through the preparatory discipline of exertion and trial, to acquire that character which will fit us for heaven. Let the mother, who is intrusted by the Almighty with the early

care of such candidates for future blessedness, remember the importance of the charge committed to her. The earliest years of her sons and the youthful period of her daughters' lives are under her influence. She may be fond of pleasure, or immersed in worldly cares, and delegate to a nurse or a governess the superintendence of her family, and plead as an excuse the variety of her engagements; but let her not deceive herself in the belief that she can innocently lay aside the task of watching with tender solicitude the developement of the intellectual and moral faculties of her young family. No other duty can compete with that; no attendance even on the benevolent institutions of a parish must be allowed to excuse the neglect of those domestic duties, which none but herself can perform. How many eminent men have looked back with affectionate gratitude to the care of a beloved parent, and acknowledged how much they have owed in advanced life to the blessing of having had a pious mother. Let us not be discouraged by the melancholy fact that impressions thus made may be obliterated by intercourse with the world. The lessons of childhood, enforced with maternal

care, and accompanied by fervent prayer, will be like seed sown, which may indeed long remain dormant, but which will at a later season spring up and bear abundant fruit. The endeavours of the mother or the governess to instil into the infant the lessons of piety and virtue, as well as to furnish the intellectual aliment suited to such tender years, should be stimulated by the remembrance, that if they remit their efforts, the work then left undone can never be accomplished. The value of early impressions, the blessing of having had the first recollections of our existence connected with the love of the Redeemer, and the sense of his goodness, is indeed invaluable, and can only be duly estimated by those who have been called to the knowledge of the truth later in life, and had to combat with worldly affections which have possessed the heart. As there is but one spring in the year, so there is but one spring in the life of man. If we neglect that precious time for sowing those seeds which we wish to possess the soil, the summer will pass away without flowers, and the autumn will be without fruit. There is a right season for all things; and, that our labour may not be in vain, it is

essential that we enter upon it at the appropriate period. So much is expected of the young in these days of science, that we must begin early to furnish the memory and cultivate the understanding; but let us beware of over-working the opening faculties. Bodily health is essential to intellectual vigour; and we should apportion both to the mind and body that degree of exercise only that will contribute to strength without producing fatigue. Let parents and teachers carefully guard against over-excitement in the young. Precocity, however it may gratify the vanity of the master, will ultimately injure the pupil. Steady perseverance will accomplish more than violent efforts, and lay the foundation of valuable habits as well as of sound knowledge. One most important lesson, which should be early taught, is the duty of self-denying exertions for the benefit of others. The young should be made to feel how greatly they are blessed in enjoying those advantages which millions of their fellow-creatures want; and the desire of doing something to relieve the distress they witness, or to contribute out of their little funds towards some benevolent institution, should be encouraged. Generosity should

be cultivated, and selfishness not suffered to grow into a habit.

Let no man who is himself blessed with the possession of knowledge be satisfied to enjoy the privilege alone. If he be a father, let his children share abundantly the advantages of paternal instruction ; if he be a master, let his servants walk in that light of truth, which the head of every Christian family should shed upon the members of his household ; and let them at least have the opportunity to kindle at the altar of family devotion their own individual piety. Let a feeling of the solemn responsibility which attaches even to the holder of one talent prompt him to communicate to others the good tidings which have gladdened his own heart, and strive to bring others to that Saviour whom he has found precious to his own soul. Let him seek to awaken the careless, and encourage the timid, and guide the youthful friends who surround him towards that land of heavenly rest, where he hopes himself to dwell, and where his spiritual children may one day join him in the inheritance of immortal glory.

CHAPTER V.

THE NECESSITY OF EMPLOYMENT, AND THE EVILS
ARISING FROM THE WANT OF IT.

BUT though I have advocated the cause of education, and represented the training of our infant population as the most sure method of improving society, it is not the only method. If it were so, no good could be hoped for till the present race of children were grown up, and become the busy actors on the theatre of the world. It is easy to direct the child, and it is not impossible to direct the man. If we would divert his mind from evil, we must present to him some object which is good, and, by stimulating his energies in laudable pursuits, withdraw them from baneful exercise.

When we consider the powers both intellectual and physical with which man is endowed, and reflect that such powers must be employed

in some way, or else render their possessor miserable, we must be struck with the conviction that occupation is essential to human happiness. By the constitution of nature, or rather by the creative word of the Almighty, activity is impressed on all things living. Even the ground we tread on will not remain idle, but will cover itself with herbage, and if not sown with good seed, will spontaneously produce weeds.

Such being the condition of man, it becomes a question alike important to the philosopher and the moralist, the legislator and the political economist, how to find suitable employment for a people. Condemn a population to indolence by the repression of industry, occasioned by an insecure right of property, or destroy commerce by excessive imposts or royal monopoly, and you degrade the character of a nation,—you drive them to insurrection, discontent, or drunkenness. Again, if you deprive man of the power of exercising his mind by withholding from him knowledge, you degrade the intellectual part of his nature, and give all the energies of his character to the animal propensities. History and experience alike prove the truth of the position, that *man must do something*. If he is not employed

in good, he assuredly will be employed in evil. In the dark ages, when knowledge was rare, and printing unknown, the intervals of war were probably occupied by the noble in the sports of the field; while the serfs were glad to close the day spent in agricultural toil with revelling and intemperance.

Such a state of society was unfavourable to the improvement of the human race. It is when each individual is settled in the occupation that befits his powers that the greatest measure of happiness, knowledge, and prosperity, is most likely to be secured. Some minds of wider grasp and more enlarged views are fit to govern and to guide the vessel of the state; but when all the crew of the ship are crowding to the helm, and deserting their own subordinate but necessary duties, the steersman would in vain attempt to direct the rudder aright;—clamour, and not judgment, would point the course, while in vain the compass and the chart would warn of hidden dangers.

May not the preceding comparison illustrate the factious spirit of the present times?—And should it not arouse those who have influence, to

employ it to prevent the threatened shipwreck of the state. That many of the worst evils which have assailed the community, have arisen from want of employment, it is scarcely necessary to prove. England is particularly liable to popular commotions from this cause. The energy of the national character, its impatience of restraint and privations, render the want of work intolerable; and the casual interruption of commercial speculation and manufacturing diligence, has often brought the country to the verge of revolution. It becomes then a question of vital importance, how these ebullitions of popular feeling may be prevented; and the mental energy and physical deprivation which occasion them, be diverted and guarded against. To check impetuous motion by inert force, has long ago been found a dangerous experiment, both by the philosopher and the politician; for science tells us, that action and reaction are equal. But we may direct what we cannot destroy; and by diverting the evil that we cannot stop, we may preserve ourselves from violence. That all power may be made by the control of wisdom to work for good, seems to

be a fundamental principle in the legislation of that Mighty Ruler who maketh the wrath of man to praise Him.

But we must consider man as he is, and adapt our measure of reformation to the character of his mind. The uneducated labourer will little understand the refined arguments of the philosopher; he must be actuated by interest, and allured by kindness; but above all, we must seek to influence him by religious considerations. Christianity demonstrates its origin from Him who made all men, by being itself suited to the wants and adapted to the capacities of all men. We must regard the physical powers, as well as the moral feelings; we must not allow the one to be idle, or the other to remain uncultivated. We must absolutely furnish employment to the hands of those who are little accustomed to mental exercise. In fact, we must find occupation for our people. No scheme of political economy can be useful, which leaves out this important measure. No dream of the philanthropist will ever be realized which has not this for its basis. Munificence may bestow her gold, and morality inculcate her lessons of temperance,—but vain will be

every human effort for improvement, if man is left in idleness, and the original command of the Creator disregarded. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

One of the most fatal symptoms of the present times is the difficulty, and in some cases the impossibility, of procuring work. Labour is too often insufficient to support life. An artificial and luxurious state of society has created wants which are artificial and luxurious; and to supply them, workmen are sometimes tempted to abandon permanent sources of employment, and engage in the manufacture of some article of fashion, which, as soon as it has become general, is despised and no longer demanded.

The transient activity is repaid by gains which render the less, but more certain wages unsatisfying; and the caprice of fashion abandons those whom her fancy had thus stimulated to exertion. To regulate these changeful movements in the world of trade would be difficult; to neutralize entirely their bad effect, impossible. All human good is alloyed by an admixture of evil. To mitigate the sufferings, and encourage the industry of the unfortunate,

is the utmost which the philanthropist can hope for. But let us not be discouraged; if those who possess influence will exert themselves, a remedy may be found for a large portion of human misery. Benevolence may open her purse to relieve alike the want which she beholds, and the sympathetic pain she feels: but let her not stop here; to prevent distress is easier than to remove it; and to hold up man in his proper station, wiser than to lift him to it again, when he has fallen. Independence and self-respect are lost by that want, which can only be satisfied by gifts.—It must then be our effort rather to prevent distress, than to wait till it has been felt before we yield assistance.

It may be asked by those even who behold with compassion the wants of their fellow-creatures, how are these wants to be relieved? We know that it is written, “the poor shall never cease out of the land,” and experience may teach us that equality of property and rank, as it was not designed by the Almighty, so it would not contribute to the happiness of man. If there were to be an agrarian law to-morrow, the boon long clamoured for would be found like fairy gifts, delusive and evanescent. The

diligent would accumulate those advantages which the indolent neglected, and the ingenious workman would gain that employment which would be denied to the ignorant. But the question returns upon us, " how are the wants of the poor, both spiritual and temporal, to be relieved?" To this it may be replied, that, if we could effectually minister to the former, the latter would in time relieve themselves. Give to man the true knowledge, and you raise his character, and give birth to that principle of self-respect which will teach him to labour after self-maintenance, instead of being a burthen to society.

Suppose a man influenced in all his habits and his dealings by the faith of a Christian, and you behold a character of such probity, diligence, frugality, and temperance, that every man who has any business to carry on would be anxious to secure him for his servant. Those who have had much to do with the poor in large towns, must have remarked, that it is generally those who bear an indifferent character, or who are not well instructed in their work, that are continually making the complaint that they cannot get employ. Of course the deserving are

sometimes exposed to the same hardships, from a failure in demand for labour, as others; but as a general rule they will be successful. The grand object then with the philanthropist must be, to bestow, as far as human instruction can go, that knowledge which will lead to the formation of such a character as has been described, to give encouragement to the cultivation of habits of sobriety and industry; to supply those who are diligent, but poor, with employment; and in times of scarcity to purchase for them materials for their trade. Loan funds, friendly clubs, under judicious management, and clothing societies, are all useful means of making the poor help themselves; and it is far wiser to encourage the conduct which will tend to keep a man above poverty, than by the most liberal alms to help him, when he has once sunk into it.—But perhaps the most effectual means of preventing that destitution, which is but too often the lot of large families, is the allotment system, which provides ground proportionable to the number of hands to cultivate it; and thus, while it affords to the cottager some of the chief means of subsistence, at the same time provides healthy and profitable labour for the boys, and renders the

number of children a blessing rather than a burthen. How far it may be practicable in the present state of society to enforce strictly the rule of right, it is not easy to determine; but we know that where crime abounds, Justice, tempered with mercy, must exercise her purifying discipline. A difference must be made in the distribution of advantages "between the righteous and the wicked:" the determination of David, "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land that they may dwell with me; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight," is worthy of a king, and has been acted upon,* on a smaller scale, with considerable effect. But where there is a rigid adherence to the principle of excluding the profligate and drunken from relief, care must be taken that, if possible, the innocent children should not suffer with the guilty parent. Care and kindness, as well as justice, must be exercised; though even were

* A nobleman in the west of England, who possessed a beautiful park, was strict in his adherence to a similar rule. He refused to give money, but never refused to give work to the poor; if scarcity prevailed, he would put on as many hands as were idle, to improve his estate; but when once he found a man in his employ who deceived him or told lies, he entirely excluded him from his service.

Justice alone to rule, she would not make the son to bear the iniquity of the father. To supply occupation to an increased and crowded population involves a question that has puzzled the political economist, and made the wisest to differ in their schemes of improvement. But perhaps we sometimes lose, by grasping at some great ideal good, the real power we possess of working a gradual but sure reformation; and, in disgust at finding a theory of universal advantage impracticable, abandon in despair those small but daily opportunities of doing good, which, though commencing in our own family or neighbourhood, will extend a beneficial influence, which will in time spread over a wide circumference. It is in vain to consider ourselves cosmopolites, engaged to reform the world: we must begin our work at home first, as citizens of our own town or village, and in that small circle seek to achieve as much as possible towards the great cause of ameliorating the sufferings of the helpless, of instructing the ignorant, and of employing the idle. Dispensaries and hospitals, which benefit science by becoming schools of surgery and medicine, and afford to the sick and wounded that prompt

relief which will be, under the Divine blessing, the means of restoring the afflicted sufferers to health and to their families,—should be maintained in every neighbourhood; and the important occasions they afford of ministering to the spiritual necessities of our fellow-creatures, then peculiarly felt, should not be neglected. How often has bodily sickness been the cause of spiritual health; and how often have the calamitous accidents of life first awakened the thoughtless to the necessity of caring for the soul! The exertions of chaplains and visitors are in such cases most important, and will, by the providence of God, redound to his glory and the salvation of immortal souls.

Another important means of benefiting a neighbourhood is by the establishment and encouragement of schools of industry both for boys and girls, which will tend to form habits of diligence and provident foresight among the poor, and contribute to their support in future life, by a knowledge of useful and profitable occupations. Agricultural and horticultural pursuits, and the manufacture of the simplest necessaries of life, are all desirable employments to engage the children, who would otherwise

remain idle, particularly in large cities which do not maintain their population in factories. Such establishments must necessarily be attended with trouble and expense; but the good they are calculated to effect would largely compensate for the exertions required to keep them up; and the comfort of the families of the poor would be greatly increased, if the father possessed that ingenuity which is fertile in contriving expedients to obviate inconveniences and supply deficiencies. A man who has been trained to industry, and seen his companions always busy, will not be satisfied to remain idle; but in the intervals of more regular occupation, or defect of work, will cultivate his garden, or repair his dwelling, and turn to good account that time which the ignorant might be tempted to spend in scenes of intemperance and wasteful extravagance. Savings' banks should be connected with schools of industry, and clothing funds established, where the small savings of the boys and girls may accumulate for their future benefit. It would be impossible to point out all the means which the judicious and Christian philanthropist will find of gratifying the benevolent desires of his heart, and advancing

the spiritual and temporal good of every human being who comes within the sphere of his influence. He will remember the example of the Good Samaritan, and be ever ready to render assistance where it is needed, and to give counsel and instruction where he sees it may be given with effect. When he rises in the morning, he knows not what service he may be called to; but he knows that where the Holy Spirit has implanted benevolent desires, the opportunity for gratifying them will not long be withheld; and he has no higher ambition than to be sent on some errand of mercy by the universal Father of all, to relieve the necessities and administer to the comfort of some afflicted member of the great family of mankind.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NATIONAL CHURCH THE GREAT MEANS OF NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT.

BUT though we may, by a careful education, place the young in the path of virtue, and by useful employment divert the adult from the temptations of idleness, the evil propensities of the human heart will never effectually be checked but by the continual influence of those renovating principles which Protestant Christianity brings into action.

When the Great Founder of our religion left the earth on which He had deigned for a while to tread in human form, and ascended to heaven to enjoy again that glory which he had before the world was;—when the Apostles, who, inspired by the Divine Spirit, and consecrated by the ethereal fire to the office of evangelizing mankind, had yielded up their lives for the tes-

timony of Jesus,—the Church, which by the convincing power of miracles they had founded, was left as the guardian of the world, and, as the spouse of Christ, was delegated to rear for eternal blessedness those spiritual children whom He suffered to redeem. The Creator, who infringes not in vain the laws which He has stamped on material nature, and shakes not our confidence in their stability by frequent interruption, vouchsafes not to modern evangelists the attestation of supernatural gifts, but sets before His rational creatures the evidence of prophecy, the witness of testimony, and the spectacle of a visible Church. An established form of religion is as a beacon to illuminate the moral darkness of the world, and to direct the course of man from time to eternity. Though religion is a personal concern, yet, if its maintenance were left to the care of individuals, the changes of public opinion or of private caprice would hazard its existence. Unity, which is the casket of truth, would be lost; and mankind, perplexed with error, would seek in vain for the precious jewel, and, forgetting the God who made them, would give themselves over to the indulgence of passion and the government of

self-will. External forms of worship are a standing demonstration of the existence of the invisible Being to whom it is addressed. Those sacred ceremonies, redolent with piety, founded in ages long gone by,—those venerable edifices, reared by the holy zeal of our ancestors, and consecrated by time,—speak with a voice of authority the power of an unseen Creator, and hold up to our observation a memento of the things which are unseen and eternal. “Had Moses and the Prophets, Christ and His Apostles, only taught, and by miracles proved religion to their contemporaries, the benefits of their instructions would have reached but a small part of mankind: Christianity must have been in a great degree sunk and forgot in a very few ages. To prevent this appears to have been one reason why a visible Church was instituted; to be like a city upon a hill, a standing memorial to the world of the duty which we owe our Maker; to call men continually, both by example and instruction, to attend to it, and, by the form of religion ever before their eyes, remind them of the reality; to be the repository of the oracles of God; to hold up the light of revelation in aid to that of nature, and pro-

pagate it throughout all generations to the end of the world."* If, then, it appears that the establishment of a visible Church was the design of the Almighty, it is clearly alike our interest and our duty to support it to the utmost of our power, and to exert our energies to bring into vigorous action those beneficial tendencies which it possesses, so that no portion of the good which it was intended to effect may be lost to the world. The love of novelty, so general, particularly among the vulgar part of mankind,—the aversion to submission, and the desire to rule, together with the wide spread of what is called the voluntary system, have threatened the subversion of long-established authority, and lessened the reverence of the people for the National Church. We live in days when there is a thirst for knowledge, and a desire among all classes to rise above the level which their fathers were content to occupy. This general movement to go forward, may be a blessing or a curse, according to the character of those who take the lead in the advance. No friend of religion, no lover of their country, is now privileged to stand still; to be passive is to betray

* See Butler's Analogy, Part ii. chap. 1.

the interests of virtue. The great cause of Christianity demands that all who have been baptized into her communion should stand forward and "fight manfully under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil." The eternal welfare of millions now alive, and millions yet unborn, hangs upon the exertions of the Church in this our day. To neglect the education of the infants and children who now surround us would be to throw back society to barbarism; to neglect to make them Christians would be, as far as human means could effect it, to quench the torch of revelation, which was committed by God to the Church to be transmitted from generation to generation, and to deliver the souls and bodies of our descendants into the power of the prince of darkness.

From a common tendency in human nature to grow insensible to those blessings which we habitually enjoy, a portion of the community is indisposed to value justly the benefits of a National Church; but could the whole of this time-honoured establishment be blotted from existence, as some of our agitators might desire, we should see in a few years the lamentable consequences of such a change, and begin to appre-

ciate more truly the blessing we had thrown from us. The "church-going bell," whose sound now summons the village congregation to hear the word of God from the lips of the appointed shepherd of their souls, would be silent; the altar round which the pious fathers of the place have from age to age knelt in humble gratitude to receive the bread of life, would be desecrated; the sacred temples of our land, unguarded by a fostering hand, would be profaned to common uses; and the walls which had echoed back the solemn anthem of praise, or the deep-felt intercession of prayer, would ring to the sound of merriment and the song of drunken revelry; the school-room would be deserted, and the well-known voice of pastoral instruction would be heard no more; the parsonage, whose doors were ever open to the unfortunate, would be the scene of Christian hospitality no more;—shut up, and left to decay, it would stand a sad memento of by-gone days, when the family who dwelt within its now desolated walls formed "a little centre of civilization" and of Christian feeling, which extended its humanizing influence over the minds and manners of the surrounding rustics, and elevated

the tone of morals by presenting an ever-present example of Christian purity and benevolence.

“Without adverting to the principal object of an ecclesiastical establishment, it still seems, on grounds of public policy, of paramount importance to fix in every parish at least one well-informed individual whose time and talents shall not be entirely devoted to secular avocations. The effects which silently and indirectly result from the habitual intercourse which must necessarily take place between a kind-hearted and intelligent land-owner and the tenants among whom he resides, are of incalculable importance to society. It is indeed generally acknowledged that nothing has more effect in forming and sustaining the character of an English yeoman than the intercourse which takes place between the country gentleman of sound mind and correct feeling, and the peasantry by whom he is surrounded. For this species of influence the community is in an eminent degree indebted to ecclesiastics. The established provision for the clergy secures, in most parishes, the constant residence of one well-educated and intelligent individual, to whom the inhabitants are willing

to look up both for example and instruction. If his conduct and demeanour be such as become his station and profession, they will imperceptibly, and almost inevitably, produce among the parishioners that decency of outward behaviour, which never fails to accompany, and not seldom even to generate, well-regulated moral feelings."*—"It is no ordinary national benefit to have a number of well-educated men dispersed over every part of the kingdom, whose especial business it is to keep up and enforce the knowledge of those most exalted truths which relate to the duties of man, and to his ultimate destiny,—and who, besides, have a sort of general commission to promote the good of those among whom they are settled in every possible manner,—to relieve sickness and poverty, to comfort affliction, to counsel ignorance, to compose quarrels, to soften all violent and uncharitable feelings, and to reprove and discountenance vice."†

Let not the advocates of the voluntary system

* See "The Revenues of the Church of England not a burden," p. 63.

† Edinburgh Review, vol. xliv. p. 500, as quoted in the same.

delude themselves with the idea that the religious instruction of the people could be carried on as well on their principles as by the present parochial clergy. The Reformed Church, established by law in these realms for nearly three centuries, has struck its roots deeply into the very foundations of society, and extended its branches over the eleven thousand parishes of our land; and were it now to be torn up and laid low, the storm of destruction bursting all barriers, and raging with unchecked violence, would soon assail the saplings that have sprung up beneath its shelter, which, being found too weak to stand alone, would be levelled together with the nurse that fostered them. The case may be different in new countries, where there is no leader, and where all denominations of Christianity being of equal growth, have struggled against each other for existence, and acquired each for itself as much room as they could fill. Supposing even that large towns could by the voluntary principle appoint and provide for their own religious instructors,—what would become of our small scattered country parishes?—what pastor would be found to tend the little flock? We may ask of the advo-

cate of this system, "With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?" Where the income of the minister depends on the numbers who attend his preaching, who would voluntarily leave the crowded city and the well-filled chapel to devote his time and talents to those of his fellow Christians who dwell in rural districts, and have little power and less inclination to maintain a minister, or provide for him a residence? Neither would it be on the score of gain alone that the preachers would be flocking to the towns, and neglecting the country. The desire to please, inherent in human nature, would render the homage of a large congregation too grateful an offering to be willingly renounced; and it is too much to hope that the generality of men would be free from the influence of ambition and the desire of applause. Another fatal consequence of this system would be, that as there would be no common standard of universal authority in matters of faith, error would infallibly creep in, the unity of the Christian Church would be broken; and, as it is difficult to judge rightly between many candidates, each contending against the other for supremacy, the people would be broken into parties; the

liberalist would reject all rule, and "every man would do that which was right in his own eyes." If such would be the fearful effect of destroying the Established Church, it behoves every friend of religion and order to be on their guard against its adversaries,—its open enemies as well as its secret betrayers. Many sincere Christians, who deeply feel the value of the fundamental truths of Christianity, reflect too little on the importance of outward forms, and established government, to preserve the existence of the visible Church. The candle must be placed on the candlestick, that it may give light to all around. It is not enough that the lamp be kindled; it must be regularly trimmed, and duly supplied with oil by those who are skilled in its management, or it will soon become dim, and leave its possessors in darkness. It is not enough that a remedial principle exist; it must be applied; so the Church and its beneficial institutions must be brought to bear upon society, or it will fail to work that improvement for which it was designed. As population increases, the ministers of religion must add to their number and double their diligence; they must stand upon the watch-tower of observation, and mark

the progress of society, that they may be ready to take advantage of its movements, and direct the current which they cannot check. The desire for education is one prevalent impulse of the present day, and the clergy must now put forth their energies to give that to the people in a salutary form, which they will take for themselves in some shape or other. By being the originators of judicious measures for the public good, they take the weapons out of the hands of their adversaries, and acquire that influence which may be turned to good account. The education of the people, unless it be in the hands of the ministers of religion, will call into existence a power contrary to the Church. We naturally love those who have conferred on us benefits, and dislike those who, from jealousy lest we should abuse advantages, have withheld them from us. It is idle to complain of the prevalence of a hostile feeling to the Church. Those who have by the usages of past ages been placed on the vantage-ground of authority must exert themselves to keep their place; and the only way to do so, is to lead and follow the people. These are days when *pretence* will soon be discovered and put to shame, and when no-

thing but sterling excellence and unmixed truth can long retain the respect and affection of an enlightened public. If the great mass of the people are thirsting for knowledge, and daily acquiring more of it, the leaders who are to influence them must study hard to maintain their superiority, and preserve by legitimate means that power which mental superiority and benevolent intentions can alone possess. The keen eye of Envy will soon discover whether the holders of an authority which she is thirsting for are actuated by ambition, and prompted to exertion only by desires of selfish aggrandizement. The ministers of religion must remember that, though in their pilgrimage through this world they will require the wisdom of the serpent, they will never be admitted to the happiness of the next, unless they are harmless as doves. If Christianity demands of the disciple the abrogation of self, how much more does she demand it of the teacher? And if the pastor do not in his own example set a high standard of purity and self-denial, the flock will attain to a very small degree of excellence, instead of being "perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect." The first Christians are by our Lord

aptly compared to *salt*,—to a preserving principle, which must be mixed up with and intimately united to every particle of the substance it is intended to preserve from decay. The clergy are to society what salt is to the body it is to embalm; and unless the salt retain and exert its purifying qualities, it is condemned by our Lord to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. An awful responsibility rests on the ministers of religion; they have an office to perform which concerns the eternal welfare of the human race; they are intrusted by the Almighty with a power which is to be exercised for the good of his creatures; they have in their keeping that healing medicine, that precious balm of Gilead which is designed to heal the broken-hearted and to cure the deadly wound which sin has made. They hold in their hands that key which unlocks the treasures of heavenly wisdom, and opens, through the knowledge of a Saviour, the gates of Paradise to man. To them is intrusted the message of peace from God to his rebellious creatures; and they are the appointed ambassadors of the Messiah to beseech men to be reconciled to their Maker, and to receive those blessed tidings into their

hearts, which the angelic host declared to the watchful shepherds of Bethlehem on the birthday of the Prince of Peace. Neither are they left to go forth alone on their mission of mercy. The Saviour, who loves the Church even "as a wife of youth," is still with them. As man, indeed, the heavens have received Him till he comes in glory to judge the wicked and reward the just; but, as God, He is ever present to guide, to counsel, to support: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee." He hath promised that "where two or three are gathered together in his name," He will be in the midst of them; and his Spirit is the great gift which He received for men, when He ascended up on high. Let the adversaries of the Church, when desiring her overthrow, beware lest haply they be found to fight against God. The page of revelation and the expectations of men, the apprehensions of the dying sinner, and the hopes of the Christian saint, alike point to a future judgment, and warn us of that day which "shall burn as an oven, when all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble;" but when, "to those who

fear the Lord, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings," and bring in that everlasting day of heavenly blessedness, whose sun shall no more go down. The advantages which society derives from the Church are such as cannot be enjoyed without responsibility. Man cannot stand in the same relation to duty after he has revelation, as before. He is accountable to his Maker for the talent which has been intrusted to him, and it thenceforward becomes his paramount duty to make a due improvement of it. It is difficult to judge rightly of the progress of Christianity, because we see only the outward surface of things, and cannot estimate the effects of that under-current which is beneficially, though silently, at work in society. The ministry of the Christian Church has been blessed to thousands of the human race, whose names, though recorded in the book of life, were unknown to fame; the mourner has been comforted, the sinner reclaimed, the believer strengthened, and the bread of life has been dealt out to many a hungry soul. Neither will the amount of good which has been done, and of the evil that has been checked, be fully known till that day when "the secrets of all

hearts shall be revealed," and every man's work be judged. Many a pious and devoted labourer in the Lord's vineyard, whose body now sleeps in the dust, shall awake to everlasting life, and shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.

It is consonant with the dealings of the Almighty to put opportunities of good into the hands of man, and leave him to improve them: advantages are the gifts of the Creator; but diligence in the use of them is the duty of man. The most unfailing medicines may be within our reach; but, if we neglect to apply them, the sick must perish for the want of them. The Christian Church, though the greatest of all means to work a reformation in mankind, will fail to accomplish that great end, if those who have received the talent neglect to profit by it. It is an awful consideration that many individual churches of Apostolic foundation have been warned by the Holy Spirit in vain, and for their carelessness have been left in darkness; their candlestick has been removed. The parable of the Husbandman teaches us that those who render not of the fruits will be deprived of their advantages, and the vineyard will be given to another.

Let Christian England beware that she cultivate duly the vast field committed to her care ; if she provide not for the spiritual wants of her colonies she may be punished with the loss of them : in the time of peace, when we say there is no danger, Rebellion may raise her head, and, casting the torch of discord among the people, may kindle the flames of civil war, and stir up strife between those who are indeed, by law and language, brethren, but who are not knit together in the bands of social love or religious unity. The pathetic declaration of the beloved Apostle is, in a certain sense, true now, as it was in his day, "that the whole world lieth in wickedness;" but let not a single individual of that body of faithful men, who have by the grace of God been gathered out of the world, be satisfied that thus it ever should remain : let them exert themselves to snatch from destruction at least one immortal soul ; and rest not from their labours and their prayers until they have added some one living stone to the great edifice of that Church which is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." The humblest labourer in this good work will not be despised by Him, who hath declared that he

who giveth even a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple shall in no case lose his reward. To the clergy themselves a vast field of usefulness is now opened. Society expects much, and is prepared to receive much from them; in many circles they have it in their power to give a tone to manners; and from the different orders and degrees in the Church there are monitors provided for the highest ranks, as well as for the middle classes, in the community: so that the prelates may hold up that example of pure religion to the court that the curate must exhibit in the remote parish, or the country-town. It is wise to adapt our measures of reform to man as he *is*, and not to man as he ought to be. We must, in dealing with the worldly, place the instructor on the same level with the scholar, or the latter may fail in that respect which is essential to ensure a favourable attention to admonition. Those misjudging economists who would reduce the revenues of the Church, and lessen the numbers of her dignitaries, would do well to consider this.

We must be thankful that the visible Church has many friends; but let not those who support her authority on political principles be sa-

tisfied with advocating her just claims, or conforming outwardly to her doctrines; they should remember that something more is required; "many hands wrought on the ark that were not saved in the ark;" and, while we bless them for ministering of their temporal things to Christ's servants, we beseech them to become partakers of their spiritual things. The great means of upholding the authority of the Christian Church, and of extending her influence, is for each of her members to exemplify her spirit in their daily conduct; to exhibit to the world that character of piety, benevolence, and peace, which her doctrines inculcate, and her formularies are calculated to cherish; and in the sincerity of Christian simplicity to be "an epistle known and read of all men."

In considering the Church as the divinely appointed guardian of mankind, we should imperfectly estimate both her duty and her power if we confine her influence within the limits of our own land; the claims of home are indeed paramount, but not exclusive of *missionary* labours. The Church established in these realms proves its apostolicity by its missionary character. Though England, when her liturgy and

formularies were framed, stood in a very different position to the heathen to what she does at present, and possessed not that vast empire both in the East and West that she does now, yet the spirit of our public prayers is, and always has been, *missionary*.

The Church daily petitions that “the Creator and Preserver of all mankind would make His ways known to all sorts and conditions of men, and His saving health unto all nations ;” and on that solemn day when she commemorates the death of the Redeemer, she intercedes with Him who “hath made all men, and hateth nothing that He hath made, to have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics,” that they may at length be gathered into the flock, and made “one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ the righteous.” We enjoy in the present day many advantages for communicating the knowledge of salvation to the heathen, which have not before been given to the Church ; and we are responsible for the due improvement of them. Societies in connection with our venerable establishment, particularly that for the “Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign parts,” and the “Church Missionary Society,”

have been formed, and are in active operation; the success which, by the Divine blessing, has hitherto attended them encourages us to hope for more extensive good from their labours, and it now rests with the public to support them; the poor may contribute their mite, and the rich may give of their abundance, to set forward the most glorious cause that was ever committed to the agency of man; the workings of a zealous spirit may now have ample scope for beneficial exercise; those who will themselves become apostles to the heathen, and be content to leave their country, to carry the message of salvation to the nations who are sitting in darkness, will reap their recompense in the everlasting world, for our Lord himself declares that "every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

England has been enriched by other countries, and it is time she should repay them in the treasures of heavenly wisdom: let us not despise those who have received less than we have of the blessings of knowledge, but be willing to communicate that light we have long so

abundantly enjoyed. The prejudice which represented the Negroes as an inferior race of men is fast wearing away; and the researches of philosophers have brought the evidence of science to corroborate the evidence of Scripture, that "God hath made of one blood all nations of the earth." The labours of missionaries have proved that as it was owing to the prevalence of moral evil that some nations were grown degenerate, so, by the application of that moral remedy which revelation supplies, the savage may become civilized, and the degraded elevated. The reception of Christianity among the Hottentots is a striking proof that the surest means of raising the character, as well as of reforming the life, is by the inculcation of those lessons which the Bible teaches. "So rapid has been the spread of civilization around the settlements of the United Brethren, by whom the task of introducing the Christian religion among the Hottentots was first undertaken, as to have given rise to a general notion that the missionaries of that church direct their endeavours in the first place to the diffusion of industry and social arts, and make religion a secondary object of attention. This, however, they uniform-

ly deny. It is the unvarying statement of these missionaries, deduced from the experience of a hundred years of patient service and laborious exertions among the rudest and most abject of human beings, that the moral nature of man must be in the first instance quickened, the conscience awakened, and the better feelings of the heart aroused by the motives which Christianity brings with it, before any improvement can be hoped for in the outward behaviour and social state; that the rudest savages have sufficient understanding to be susceptible of such a change; and that, when it has once taken place, all the blessings of civilization follow as a necessary result.”*

Thus we see, that if we open to the poor African or the persecuted Australian the knowledge of his immortality,—if we display the mercy of our common Father in providing, through the atonement of the Redeemer, a way of salvation to all his creatures,—we supply a new object to his desires, a new stimulus to his exertion: by informing his mind and enlarging his heart,—by showing him in what he differs

* Dr. Prichard's Physical History of Man, vol. i. p. 183.

from the brute creatures which surround him,—we raise him higher and higher above the animal, and elevate him to the dignity of a rational, an intellectual, and an accountable being. If, then, our opportunities of benefiting our fellow-creatures are so great, shall we be excused if we neglect to use them? It is surely for want of considering the awful consequence of an immortal being dying in unrepented sin, that we are so indifferent to the spiritual welfare of those around us. If we saw our friend walking carelessly towards a bridge which we knew would not bear his weight for an instant, should we allow him to advance upon it without lifting up our voice even in agony lest he should peril his life? Could we bear the thought of silence? Would it even be possible in such a case to preserve it? Such is our natural anxiety to save the mortal life of our fellow-creature: and shall we feel no anxiety—shall we make no effort to save his soul? We have received the Gospel, and believe it to be “the power of God unto salvation.” We have, together with that blessed message of glad tidings, received a solemn and last command from our Lord to make known that message to

all nations. Has this been done? Is it even felt as a duty,—as a most imperative duty, by the generality of professing Christians? Surely the cause of this indifference must be a want of reflection on the real state of the heathen. The reproach of the Prophet is still merited, “ My people do not consider.” We do not sufficiently consider that “ there is none other name under heaven given whereby we can be saved but the name of Jesus :”—we do not consider the parting command of that same Saviour, “ Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” We profess to believe in the mercy of God, that He will not judge them by a law which He has not given them; but shall we escape the punishment of him “ who knew his Lord’s will and did it not?” Do we not know that it is His will that “ all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth?” Can we be content to possess the truth ourselves, and let thousands and millions of our fellow-creatures perish in ignorance and misery? Do we not see them risking their eternal state on no better foundation than the faith of Mahomet or Bramah?—nay, even of horrid idol

worship, and sometimes human sacrifices? But some may say, "How can we help it?" When did the Almighty command what was impossible? We must preach, though they may or may not listen; we must sow the seed, though the harvest may be blighted. But has it not been found by glorious experience that the task of evangelizing the heathen is not impossible? The difficulty consists more in the task of rousing a luxurious people to the self-denial required by our Redeemer in His true followers. The blessing pronounced on those who "convert a sinner from the error of his ways," is read, and the injunction even to the easy duty of "praying the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers" into his vineyard, is listened to without being acted on. It may be urged that the duty of preaching the Gospel either at home or abroad belongs exclusively to a particular body of men: but can these men go forth single-handed?—without help, without our sympathy, without encouragement, without our prayers? Should we not consider it a privilege to aid them by our pecuniary contributions? But, above all, we should each of us pour out our intercessions to our common Father for our benighted brethren, and im-

plore the Great Disposer of all things not only to stir up a spirit of missions among us, but to bless the labours of those who are gone forth. If every English Christian did thus feel an interest in the missionary cause, is it conceivable that the gross darkness which now covers the nations should long resist the blaze of Gospel light? Can we mark unmoved the course of events, and neglect to observe the immense increase of British power, and of British influence among foreign nations, and not ask who has permitted it, and why it has been permitted? These are days of power,—we share in its possession;—shall we be indifferent to its exercise? These are days when mighty efforts are making,—shall we be merely indolent spectators? Shall we shun the race, when the prize is so glorious? Shall we not make some attempt to imitate the example of “the glorious company of the Apostles” and “the noble army of Martyrs,”—of those among our own countrymen who have hazarded their lives for the testimony of Jesus, who have fought the good fight, who have finished their course, and have now entered into rest? Surely they look down from their thrones above on the concerns of this lower world; and

what cause can be to them so dear as the cause of Him who hath redeemed them,—of Him for whom they died? and, if the repentance of a *single* sinner causeth joy in the presence of the angels of God, how much greater must be the rejoicing of the heavenly host when the everlasting Gospel is preached to the nations who were sitting in darkness, and the voice of prophecy is changed to the shout of jubilee, for “the Gentiles have come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising!”

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS ON CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY.

THE design of the foregoing pages has been to offer a few thoughts on the important subject of man's responsibility, and to suggest the various occasions which call for its exercise, when, by the Divine favour, Christians may become blessings to others. But as it is the motive which gives value to the action, and alone renders it acceptable to our Judge; so we should look carefully into our hearts, and examine whether we are actuated by those holy principles which the Gospel inculcates. The most powerful motive in a generous heart is gratitude; and if this is felt towards an earthly benefactor, how much more should it be felt towards Him who "hath given us life, and breath, and all things;" and, to crown all other mercies, has

“ spared not His own Son, but given Him up for us all.” Every real Christian who has been brought out of darkness into his marvellous light, must feel that a soul redeemed demands a life of praise; and the Apostle St. Paul, after having expatiated in glowing language on “ the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God,” in the great work of man’s redemption, urges on his converts the duty of showing their gratitude by their lives, and calls upon them by the constraining motive of thankfulness for mercies already received to present their “ bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God ;” and, as if anticipating the derision of the scornful, who might term such self-denying disciples enthusiasts, he adds, “ which is your reasonable service ;” that service which, in simple justice and plain reason, is due from you to your Maker, Redeemer, and Preserver. This self-devotion is the grand secret of Christian piety, the spring which sets in motion the whole scheme of philanthropic exertion, and constrains all the faculties of soul and body into the service of our great Master. When once the Holy Spirit has overcome in the heart the great enemy of man’s salvation, and made a sacrifice

of selfishness,—when the believer can adopt the language of the converted Apostle, and ask, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”—when, in humble dependence on the Divine protection, he can say with the same Apostle, “whose I am, and whom I serve,”—all labour will be light, and the service of Christ will be found to be perfect freedom. The hardest labour is to convert our own heart; but when, by the help of One that is mighty, that is accomplished, the blessing of God will go with us in our attempts to convert others.

The power we have to benefit our neighbours is in itself a blessing from God, and a talent to be employed. “I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing,” is the Divine order and law; to this end the Almighty has implanted the sympathetic and compassionate affections in the heart of man. Even the unenlightened heathen feel their influence; but to the Christian is superadded the Divine principle of charity and brotherly love, *for Christ's sake*; and the prospect which revelation opens to him of a world beyond the grave, adds a new stimulus to his exertions, and excites in his bosom a desire to snatch from destruction, and

guide into the way of peace, those whom he sees perishing for lack of knowledge. To him has been made known the greatness of the Divine compassion; he believes that “God would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth;” and to subserve the intentions of Omnipotence thenceforth becomes alike his honour and his happiness. He knows no distinction of tribe, or language, or colour; but assured that Christ tasted death for all men, and being commanded to honour all men, he prays and labours for the whole brotherhood of man; and, extending his views beyond the present life, he looks forward with joyful expectation to the complete triumph of the Redeemer over the powers of darkness; and longs for that glorious period when those who have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, shall join the heavenly anthem, saying, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!” In the character of St. Paul we see the motive which led him to make such zealous exertions, and which should lead us to do likewise, — “the love of

Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ; that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them." What would have been our state if Christ had not died for us, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God?" What blessing is there that we do not owe to Him ? He has in man's nature paid the penalty of man's transgression ; He has offered up, by his sacrifice of Himself upon the cross, that atonement which has made reconciliation for sinful man ; He has by His Spirit spoken the words of consolation to the trembling penitent ; He has by His precious promises smoothed the bed of death, and opened the prospect of a blissful eternity. Let us show our gratitude for these blessings by our zeal in making them known to others. It will be vain to boast of our Christian privileges unless we show our faith by our obedience. Christ has indeed purchased us unto Himself for a peculiar people, but it is that we may be zealous of good works ; and as the chosen people of God in old time were rejected because they failed in that which was expected of them, so will Christians be excluded

from the enjoyment of the purchased blessing if they fail to accomplish that which they are called upon to do, by every motive of love and duty. As if to try our faith, and to give exercise to our obedience, the Almighty has surrounded us with objects which excite our pity, and demand our care. We have all of us some opportunities of ministering to the temporal and spiritual wants of our brethren; and, if we neglect to take advantage of them, we are guilty of the sin of him who buried his talent in the earth. Some of the ways in which we may benefit our fellow-creatures, by instructing the ignorant, employing the idle, or extending the influence of the Christian Church, have been pointed out in the preceding chapters; but to point out all the various means by which a person of active charity will contrive to do good, is impossible; if the disposition to do good exist, the occasions for exercising it will soon present themselves. We cannot tell, when we rise in the morning, what may be the claims upon our benevolence during the day; but if a heathen emperor could declare at supper that he had lost a day, because he had done no good to any one, a Christian

should feel shame that, having himself received abundant blessings both temporal and spiritual, he has passed not only a day, but a week, or a month, without adding to the knowledge of the ignorant, or the comforts of the needy. Some may delude themselves with intentions of doing good at a future time ; but life is short : what we can accomplish *to-day*, let us not defer till *to-morrow* ; for we know not what a day may bring forth.

It is related of a pious but dilatory man, that he had intrusted to him a sum of money in notes, wherewith he was to found a school : he intended to do it, but, from some cause, perhaps a trifling one, deferred it till the morrow ; and during the night his house took fire, and the notes were burnt.

We delay, and delay, and hope for a more favourable concurrence of circumstances to realise our plans ; and forget that we might as well wait on the river's brink, and delay to cross until the whole stream had passed away, as to expect that useful undertakings can be accomplished without effort, and good designs be brought into action without difficulty. In a world where sin abounds, we must fight and

conquer opposition before we can achieve the purposes of benevolence, or establish institutions for the benefit of man.

But, whatever exertion may be demanded of us in the path of duty, we have abundant encouragement to persevere, for God has so ordered it that the charitable man should be a happy man: those who are merciful to others will themselves partake of the mercy of Him who is the fountain of happiness as well as life, and can pour it into the hearts of His creatures at any moment, and under any circumstances which to Him seem fit. How little do the votaries of fashion, or the idolaters of wealth, think of this! How apt are all to "spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not;" forgetting that *present* peace and joy are promised to the believer, as well as future blessedness! The infinite wisdom and goodness of God are seen in that connection which subsists between virtue and happiness; between the suffering of the weak, and the sympathy of the powerful. Whenever it is essential that man should act, an impulse is supplied to prompt him; the helplessness of the infant excites the tenderness of

the parent; and the exercise of the careful attention that follows becomes the cause of preservation to the one, and of satisfaction to the other. The compassion of our nature is ever called into the most vigorous action by those distressed objects that most require its exercise; and the consciousness of having relieved another's misery becomes a luxury to ourselves.

The gratitude we owe for mercies received, the love we owe to Him who hath redeemed us, the pain we feel at the sight of woe, and the pleasure we experience in relieving it, are all powerful motives to urge us to virtuous diligence, and excite us to benevolent zeal. But there is another motive which with some minds may be yet more powerful, and which acts upon that passion of fear of an unknown futurity, which in death, if not in life, must be felt by the sinner. Many of the most awful of our Lord's parables are founded on the accountability of man, and addressed to that judge within the breast which will sooner or later make the stoutest heart to tremble. We are conscious of our talents, and we are conscious of our responsibility for them. It is declared that, "to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be

required." To the higher and middle classes of English Christians it may be justly said that the ten talents have been committed.

Wealth, influence in society, mental powers, and, above all, *time*, are talents capable of improvement, or of abuse. Riches may be wasted in extravagance, or hoarded by avarice; the luxuries of life may drain those funds which, if properly directed, would furnish the means of extensive benevolence, and shower upon the poor and needy the comforts of this life, and the instruction which may fit them for another. The gratification of vanity often renders those who are born to riches too necessitous to relieve the destitute, or support religious societies. Influence in society, whether it be owing to birth or station, may be used only to extend the empire of fashion, and encourage frivolity; and those mental powers which should be employed to the glory of God, and the good of man, may be perverted by ambition, or suffered to lie idle by negligence. But the talent which is perhaps the most frequently abused, is *time*. Our ever-blessed Redeemer has purchased for us a title to future happiness, but

the same Scriptures, which teach us that eternal life is the gift of God, warn us that we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; and time is given us that we may work. If that time is spent in idle vanities, and the great work of salvation is neglected, how can we expect to receive the promised gift? If we have performed the service of sin, we shall assuredly receive the wages of sin; and inspiration declares the solemn truth, that "the wages of sin is death,"—death eternal,—not the death which is to the real believer the gate of heaven, and an admittance to the presence of our Lord,—but death which consigns the sentient being to the companionship of fallen spirits, and an immortality of woe. Let not the great enemy of our souls delude us, as he did our first parents in Eden, by persuading us, "ye shall not surely die." If we set before our eyes more constantly the realities which await us, the solemnities of a future judgment, and the final destination of the righteous and the wicked, we should have more zeal to work out our own salvation. Our great object must be, to let the faith in that which is future, prevail over the temptation of that

which is present; and the great means of accomplishing this is to “look at the things which are unseen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

THE END.

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